

33

A

REPLY

TO THE

REV. F. RANDOLPH'S

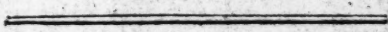
“*Scriptural Revision of Socinian Arguments Vindicated.*”



K

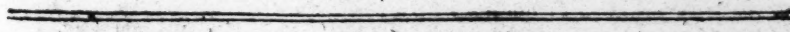
BENJAMIN HOBHOUSE,

BARRISTER AT LAW, AND A. M. OF BRAZEN-NOSE
COLLEGE, OXFORD.



“If ever there was a Cause which could justify, or *require*, a Separation from
“any Church in Earth, it is a *Conviction* that the One True God, our
“Heavenly Father, is there dishonoured; and his peculiar Glory given
“to another.”

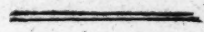
Christie's Discourses on the Divine Unity, p. 300.



BATH, PRINTED BY R. CRUTTWELL,

AND SOLD BY

T. CADELL, LONDON.



M DCC XCIII.





TO THE

REVEREND MR. RANDOLPH.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

SINCE my return home, after so long an absence, my time has been so taken up by domestic arrangements, that until lately I have not had an opportunity of reading your Vindication of your Letter to Dr. Priestley. You will permit me to infer, from your angry and vaunting style, that, had he, or some other celebrated Humanitarian Divine, taken up the pen, it would have been more pleasing to you than an attack from a presumptuous Layman, "*a novice in arms*;"* whom you esteem yourself able to crush by the least effort

A 3

effort

* Randolph's Preface, p. 8.

effort of your mighty strength. This contempt for the learning of your opponent is visible in almost every page. Whilst *your* extensive acquirements embrace all which the fathers have written, and all which has before been brought forward in the controversy, your *poor adversary* is acquainted only “*with frequent citations,*”^b and therefore the most common and stale quotations are offered as “*new matter to him:*”^c whilst *your* observations, delivered with great pomp, and with an air of the most perfect self-satisfaction, are solid and decisive, the arguments of your *poor adversary* are so shallow as to forbid “*the gravity of reply:*”^d whilst *your* critical skill, which disdains, however, to be confined within the rules of grammar,^e is, in your own imagination,

^b “ And the frequency of the citation cannot have left you ignorant of it.” Randolph’s Letter, p. 35.

^c “ But, from the conviction, that much *new matter* might be suggested to you.” Ibid. p. 21.

^d Ibid. p. 64.

^e See a note to the chapter of contents in my former work, p. 13; in which I have shewn, by more instances than one,

gination, almost without a parallel, your *poor adversary* has given constructions "for which" "a school-boy would have been corrected."^f Really, Sir, without promising myself the success of David, or of Shakespear's Orlando, I cannot help comparing you to Goliah, or to Charles, the Duke's wrestler.^g Think you, that in thus playing the braggart you give

one, that Mr. Randolph regards not the grammatical rule relating even to nominative case and verb. See likewise p. 14 of his last work, where he observes, "the very baptifmal form and words of our church *is* adduced." And also p. 96, where he says, "great thanks, and much weight *is* due." The use of relative and antecedent is equally unattended to by him. See my former letters, p. 9.

^f "In short, Sir, there is hardly a school-boy, out of his grammar, that would construe the passage as you interpret it; and if he did, there is not a school-master in the kingdom who would not correct him." Randolph, p. 34.

^g Before Mr. Randolph entered the field against me, it is not unnatural to conceive him "stalking with conscionable strides," and using the following terms: *Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the field.* I Sam. xvii. 44.—or, perhaps, the following: *Come, where is this YOUNG GALLANT that is so desirous to lye with his mother earth.* Shakespeare, As You Like It.

give a proof of your judgment? or rather let me ask, is there not as great a portion of indiscretion as of vanity, in declaring the mean opinion you entertain of your adversary? Perhaps even a *Randolph*^h may be overthrown; and, should it be his misfortune, all the haughty phrases he has used may be thrown into his teeth, and the mortification of his defeat be most sensibly increased.

“ If,

^h From the manner in which Mr. Randolph is praised, it might be falsely imagined that this last is not his own work, but that of a too partial friend: “ And, I am afraid, “ that the *love of victory* has, in this instance, been too “ strongly blended with the love of truth.” Randolph’s Preface, p. 8.

Mr. Randolph imagines, that to conquer *him* would be attended with glory. This he cannot suppose, merely because he knows himself to be a clergyman of the church of England; for he cannot consider the bishop’s ordination as an unequivocal proof of literary merit in every one who receives it. It must be, therefore, because he holds himself to be a Divine, conspicuous for his great learning.

“ And, depend upon it, there is no judicious reader who “ shall refer &c., but who will discover” &c. Randolph, p. 24.

As every school-master in the kingdom must necessarily approve of Mr. R.’s criticisms, so every *judicious* reader cannot but admit the force of his arguments. *His* learning, and *his* judgment, must be referred to as the common standard.

If, however, you had only been ostentatious, I, as your *antagonist*, so far from complaining, should have rejoiced. The sensible part of the public will judge of us only by the weight of our arguments: should you be vanquished, they will not *praise* you for your *Bobadillian* language;¹ your self-applause will only bring upon you an unpitied doom, and you will become the object of derision.

But I have a charge of a different kind against you. How is it, that, when you bring forward expressions from the works of others, you scarcely ever give a note of reference?^k Or, (what is no less unjustifiable)

¹ *Twenty more, kill them too; twenty more, kill them too; twenty more, kill them all.* Every Man in his Humour. Johnson.

Mr. Randolph thinks to destroy Humanitarians as easily, by a dash of his pen, as Captain Bobadil thought to demolish his enemies by the mere wielding of his rapier.

^k “ And, unless you *claim the exclusive privilege of reproach*, when the members of the church are complimented with the name of *sloths* and *gluttons*; when they “ are threatened with a prison,” [what can this mean? a prison is more likely to be the lot of a Dissenter] “ and are accused

fiable) how is it that you make an accusation against me, which, not only by no good-natured, but by no construction, however tortured, my words will possibly bear?

"cused of degrading the Deity, and of believing a fiction, which, for the magnitude of its absurdity, beggars every thing in the superstitions of the world," &c. Randolph's Preface, p. 14.

Why did not Mr. Randolph mark from what author he had quoted this passage, that no person might attribute it to me? This he certainly should have done. Whether there be any impropriety in the terms, is another question; it is enough for my present purpose, that Mr. Randolph inserts them with a view to mark *his* disapprobation of them; and therefore he should have taken care that his imputation should fall upon no other gentleman than him who had actually used such "complimentary" language.

"But the unhappy riots of Birmingham have proved an ample store-house of complaint; and the persecution of Dr. Priestley is issued forth upon suitable occasions, with its attendant train of arbitrary power, bigotry of priestcraft, divine right of kings, party zeal, and slavish hierarchy." Randolph's Preface, p. 13.

In speaking of these riots, where have I used one of these words? Would not any one, who had either not read my letters, or had not a correct memory of them, suppose Mr. Randolph to be making citations from my work?

bear?¹ Could I suspect that you were capable of intentional misrepresentation, I would bid you remember, that he who, without foundation,

¹ "On your appeal to the candor of the public, on purpose to introduce the persecution of Dr. Priestley, I should not comment, but from the mode in which you have conveyed it. To describe the desperate violence of a mob, as a scheme of *meditated outrage*, and to charge *the friends of the church* with the disgraceful actions of a drunken and deluded populace, requires something more than the language of *insinuation*." Randolph's Preface, p. 13.

To this sentence I shall only beg to oppose the part to which it alludes; and, I believe, it will be a matter of surprise, how Mr. Randolph could make such a mistake.

"In perusing these pages, let me intreat that you will, as far as possible, divest your minds of prejudice. The religious opinions of Dr. Priestley brought upon him in July 1791 the most outrageous persecution; for it is ridiculous to say, that the sufferers at Birmingham were attacked for their *political* principles. Had the celebration of the French Revolution been the cause of offence, the churchmen who assembled on that day would likewise have been the objects of popular fury." See preface to my former work, p. 9.

When Mr. Randolph, whom I shall, in more instances than one, prove to be extremely hardy in his assertions, declares, as if he knew what passed in my breast, that I appealed to the candor of the public, *for the purpose* of introducing

dation, aims to render another odious, often, and indeed justly, becomes odious himself. Or, in what instance, Sir, have I been guilty of

ducing the persecution of Dr. Priestley, he declares what he had no reason to know, and deceives himself. And I would ask the reader, whether, in the sentence I have now a second time submitted to him, he perceive that I have represented the riots at Birmingham as a *meditated outrage*, and charge it upon the *friends of the church*. I had no other object than to make it appear that the sufferers at Birmingham were attacked for their *religious*, not for their *political* opinions; and I *cautiously* avoided the enquiry, whether the conduct of the populace were not too systematic to proceed entirely from themselves. Since the publication of my former letters to Mr. Randolph, Dr. Priestley has offered to the world the second part of his Appeal, particularising persons as instigators of the Birmingham riots. Let the public judge how far he has substantiated his accusation. I still continue to offer no opinion upon the subject.

But will Mr. Randolph endeavour to make good his charge against me, by the note which I have subjoined? "The most unwarantable measures have lately been employed to increase the odium against this truly estimable character," (Dr. Priestley) &c. &c. *usque ad finem*. See the Preface to my former Letters, p. 9.

Whoever reads this note in the most cursory way, will see that there is no insinuation against any man, or any set of men; as having instigated the mob to commit the Birmingham outrages. I refer only to a work published just after the trial of the rioters, at the time when the odium against

Dr.

of disingenuity, that you should hold yourself warranted in supposing it *possible* that I can commit it? By disingenuity, I understand a wilful perversion of the meaning of an author, a wilful suppression of what might throw light upon a subject,^m &c. &c. You may think, that in making such an imputation, and insinuating a charge of quibbling," you affect not a man's reputation, and hurt not his feelings of honor: you may pronounce, "that a man's private character "has no concern with his printed arguments;"ⁿ but *my* mind allows no such doc-

Dr. Priestley so strongly prevailed; and I condemn this work, because it has *evidently* an inflammatory tendency. It is said to be the labor of Mr. Hardinge, barrister at law. Whether it merit the censure I have passed upon it, is a question I am not afraid of submitting to any unprejudiced mind.

^m "I should not, but for your extraordinary reply, have "been obliged to strengthen my arguments by a charge of "inattention or disingenuity." Randolph, p. 3.

It is evident, by these words, that whilst Mr. R. thinks me capable of *disingenuity*, he agrees in my definition of it. He supposes it something different from inattention.

ⁿ "The Arian might accuse you of quibbling." Randolph's Letter, p. 103.

^o "And to your accusation of my charging with *disingenuity* and *evasson* a person of Dr. Priestley's long-
"blished

trine. If a man may be disingenuous in *argument*, and yet have a good private character; he may have no regard for truth, and yet be denominated a lover of it; he may assign *laudable* motives for taking part in a controversy, whilst he is governed by the *basest*; and all this time his morality is unimpeachable!

I could not resist my inclination to touch upon your vain-boasting, and the manner in which you have conducted the controversy, before I began my comments on what you have brought forward under the *form* of argument. I shall not *now* give much trouble to the reader, but for my brevity let him confess his obligations to you, who have afforded so little occasion for any addition to my former work.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Your's,

B. H.

“ blished and well-known respectability, I have only to
 “ answer, that it was founded upon proofs of his not meet-
 “ ing fairly the words of scripture, and that his private cha-
 “ racter has no concern with his printed *arguments*.” Ran-
 dolph's Preface, p. 16.

LETTER II.

REMARKS UPON YOUR PREFACE.

DEAR SIR,

I Now propose to make a few observations upon parts of your preface which have not been already noticed.

“ The credit you give me for a belief of
“ those doctrines which I endeavor to sup-
“ port, I am unwilling to derive from our
“ long-subsisting intimacy, because it is an
“ acknowledgment, that your candor, I trust,
“ would not withhold from any *religious op-*
“ *ponent.*”

To any religious opponent whatsoever I should certainly give credit for honesty of mind, had I no evidence to the contrary; but is it

• Randolph's Preface, p. 1.

it not far more pleasing to receive a favorable testimony, founded upon the certain grounds of knowledge, than upon bare presumption? When, therefore, "you are unwilling to derive from our long-subsisting intimacy" the credit I give you for integrity, but would have it in no other way than I should concede it to *any* religious opponent, your mind is not cast in the same kind of mould as that of others, who generally put a higher value upon the praise which is suggested by an acquaintance with their character.

"And, I am afraid, that the love of victory (though far from supposing it to have taken place) has, in this instance, been too strongly blended with the love of truth," &c. to the end of the paragraph.

I comment not now upon the portion of vanity which this sentence contains, because I have done it already. When you say, "that the love of victory was, you fear, too strongly blended with the love of truth," you must necessarily

* Randolph's Preface, p. 7.

necessarily mean that it was either *sensibly* or *insensibly* blended. If the former be your meaning, a charge of falsehood against me is involved in it, for I have declared “that I “was animated by no other motive than a “desire of promoting religion and virtue in “the world.”^p I am unwilling to think that such a charge was in your contemplation; but what shall I say when I read that “my reply is to be attributed “to a certain “*esprit de corps*, which *pitched* upon” me, &c. “and that to defeat a Clergyman in the “field of divinity, was a prize too tempting to be resisted by a Layman?” If I yield to temptation, must I not be conscious of its force?

But let me suppose it was your intention to represent me as being *insensibly* under the influence of a love of victory, whilst I *fancied* that I was *solely* governed by a love of truth. Upon what evidence is your opinion supported? Upon no other than the circumstance of your being a Clergyman, and myself

B

a Layman.

^p See the opening of my Preface.

a Layman. Were I, Sir, inclined to argue upon the same principle, (upon no other than the difference of our situation) might I not, with the same propriety, infer that your love of truth is blended with a sense of interest? Might I not with the same propriety declare, that farther promotion in the church was the bias which induced you to become a controversialist, whilst you imagined that you had no other motive than to combat what you thought dangerous errors? But I will not follow you in hazarding assertions without evidence. Example is useful, sometimes in teaching us to imitate, sometimes in teaching us to avoid the conduct of others.

“ In fact, sir, when (as you justly observe)
 “ the arguments in many parts of *your* work
 “ have already been brought forward, and are
 “ opposed (as I readily allow) to old and very
 “ common observations in mine, our contro-
 “ versy would gain little by the interest of
 “ novelty, nor probably add much to the
 “ stock of public information.”^a

Why

^a Randolph's Preface, p. 9.

Why then did you begin the attack upon Dr. Priestley? Do you not here offer a powerful inducement for not having entered upon the contest with *any person*, but more particularly with *him*? Your observations you allow to be "old and very common, and little calculated to increase the stock of public information."

"It might bring on personal dispute, but would not, I fear, lead to particular conviction; it may divide the circle of our acquaintance, but will never promote the harmony of their union. Without the hope, therefore, and without the desire, of amicably pursuing the subject to the bottom, this vindication I pronounce to be my last."

It might be amusing to consider what a person who had not read your letter to me, might immediately observe, on hearing that you had determined to retire from the field. *Has not Mr. Randolph thought proper to attack*

B 2

Humani-

* Randolph's Preface, p. 9.

Humanitarian sentiments: why then does he immediately decline the engagement upon the appearance of a "novice in arms?" Is it because he thinks that, by this last stroke, he has overcome the strongest exertions of Humanitarians? Alas! if he thinks so, he is not acquainted with half of what they are capable of urging in behalf of their cause. Or by declaring his resolution to fight no longer, is it his object to prevent his adversary from striking his severest blows? That would be a cowardly manœuvre.

But what would be his surprize, when, upon taking your book into his hands, he is informed that you desist in future from wielding your powerful arm, through the apprehension of occasioning personal dispute between you and me, and of dividing the circle of our acquaintance? Would he not exclaim, *What, does Mr. R. think that he and his opponent cannot but quarrel, because they maintain different opinions? If this be the necessary consequence of the opinions of either, it is no bad evidence of their falsehood. Besides, Mr. Randolph must entertain an unfavorable opinion, either of himself or his opponent; of himself, if he knows that he cannot*

cannot amicably pursue this subject to the bottom; of his opponent, if he thinks that discussion will lead him into personal dispute. Why also does Mr. Randolph apprehend a disunion amongst the circle of their common acquaintance? Is it not an act of injustice in Mr. Randolph, to suppose that his friends cannot entertain different sentiments without animosity towards each other? What reason can he have for taking up this idea?

Having expressed my joy “ that certain
 “ literary societies were formed in defence of
 “ the established religion and civil govern-
 “ ment of the country, because discussion
 “ would be thus excited, and by the collisions
 “ of controversy the spark of truth be struck
 “ out,” you observe, “ you had scarcely, fir,
 “ committed your wishes to the press, when
 “ this *spark of truth* had nearly set the whole
 “ kingdom in a blaze, when a disaffection to
 “ the national church, by ^{en-}discouraging a dis-
 “ regard for the laws intended for its pro-
 “ tection, &c.” *usque ad finem.*”

B 3

Should

^s Randolph's Preface, p. 10.

Should you not have specified the laws you mean; for who can otherwise understand your allusion? When first I read the whole paragraph, of which the above is a part, it appeared to me that you had as much misconstrued my *spark of truth*, as was formerly done by Dr. Priestley's *train of gunpowder*, and that from this expression of mine, figurative like ~~that of~~ his, you intended to infer, that I wished for discussion with a view "to set the kingdom in a blaze." Since, however, by private letter, you have given me to understand, that no such personal insinuation was in your thoughts, I shall consider you as charging *generally* the publications of many dissenters and reformers, with having nearly kindled a civil commotion.

In the first place, I deny the fact. There was no probability of commotion in the country; it was a clamour raised by the aristocracy, with a view to feel the pulse of the nation, to procure associations in defence of Church and State against artificial danger, and thus to better excite the public detestation against French principles. This opinion of mine is
founded

founded upon attending to what passed, or rather what did *not* pass, before the House of Commons; for no evidence of the least disturbance for any national cause was brought forward, no plea to justify the extraordinary measure of embodying the militia, and calling the parliament together unexpectedly. All that could be advanced, was a trifling discontent at Shields and some other place, amongst some mariners or others, for an advance of wages.

I will not, however, stop here, but contend that publications against Church and State, of whatsoever kind, not only bring no additional evil upon a nation, but may frequently be productive of the greatest advantages.

If your ecclesiastical constitution and civil government be so perfect as you think, mere ill-founded invective can deceive but few; and the antidote of reason, supplied by the vigilance of those who from motives of profit or principle, or both, are ready to defend existing establishments, will easily counteract the poison. Such literary societies as yours
may

may furnish the remedy. Nay, the excellencies both of Church and State may appear brighter, in consequence of the opportunity given for holding their lustre up to view. If you say that there are always desperate characters, who are glad to avail themselves of any thing plausible, and make it the ground of violence, then I reply that such persons will always find some pretence or other to color their schemes. Any commotion therefore, raised by such characters, must not be charged to the account of the publications, for it would have taken place *otherwise*.

Thus might it be argued, if the publication contained no more than ill-grounded invective; but what if it stated errors in Church Doctrine, or real grievances in the State, would you stop the mouth of reasonable objection or complaint? You will not surely be so hardy as to offer yourself an advocate for the measure. If those who ought to give no impediment to the progress of truth, throw obstacles in its way; and, instead of redressing grievances, persevere in oppression; consequences are rather to be placed at the door of those

those who are guilty of the omission of duty, than of those who only pointed out the evil. Nay, the latter frequently do a real service, for they lead people to think properly, and thus enlarge the bounds of truth and happiness. Whilst, therefore, I think every person highly culpable who writes with a *sedition design*, yet I would have no serious, conscientious person, who thinks reform or change necessary, either in Church or State, desist from giving and supporting his opinions in face of the public. If such characters, through fear of raising sedition, or thro' fear of being reputed seditious by those who are interested in giving strength and continuance to abuses, should remit their labours; error, both religious and civil, must enjoy perpetual empire. Had the chief instruments and promoters of the reformation reasoned thus, this country might now have had a Roman-Catholic establishment; and you, sir, if truth had appeared to you in the same shape as now, must have been a Dissenter. This certainly must have been your lamentable situation, unless some ancestor had been a favourer of the national church, “ from
“ whom

“whom you might have traced the best direction of your faculties.”

Let me, however, admit for the sake of argument, that publications containing free animadversions upon Church and State might occasion some persons to become riotous, who otherwise might have remained peaceable; still it is better to submit to an evil which the sword of the civil magistrate may without difficulty remove, than make the ruling powers arbiters of truth, who might stifle her ere she was born. A wicked administration would make the press its own engine, and a people who heard but one side, would be easily deluded.

And as to your assertion, “that there is no class of Dissenters so much disliked at present, by the members of the established church, as the disbelievers of Christ’s pre-existence, I believe it to be founded in fact, because there is no class of men so inimical to its interests.”

In

* Randolph’s Preface, p. 14.

In what respect? Is the propagation of virtue the most *interesting* object to the established church? If so, surely *her* votaries are not more strict in requiring holiness of life than the disbelievers of Christ's pre-existence, who allow no vicarious merit, and oppose the whole system of traffic in sin. What then did you mean, when you charged the Humanitarians with being so hostile to the interests of the church? Did you intend to convey, that they for the greater part disapproved, not only unequal distribution of Church livings, but also all civil establishments of religion? If this were your idea, which I confess it is frequently difficult to discover, the Humanitarians are indeed inimical to the interest of the church, "because they are enemies to injustice, and all its train of mischiefs."

"When, in short, to borrow the expressions
 "of a most judicious writer, indecent and violent attacks have been made on the national
 "liturgy and church; violent from their
 "acrimony, and indecent both from their
 "violence and their contempt of subsisting
 "laws, &c."

Hence

^u Randolph's Preface, p. 15.

Hence I infer that you approve the subsisting laws against Dissenters, *i. e.* the laws under which almost every remark upon the liturgy may be made the object of punishment—the laws which make civil distinctions for religious opinions—and the laws which make a serious conscientious declaration of a disbelief of the Trinity, an act of blasphemy to be punished with incapacity on the first conviction, and afterwards “with imprisonment without bail or main-prize, &c.” Proceed but a step or two farther, and Mr. Burgess and yourself will not be out done by Bonner and Gardiner.

“When” (pursuing still the quotation from Mr. Burgess’s sermon on the Divinity of Christ) “the most uncharitable assertions have been thrown on the ministers of the church for their conformity to her doctrines.”

I can no more understand this allusion than the former, in which you, “fighting
“ in

* See 1 Eliz. c. 2, the *Corporation* and *Test* Acts, and also stat. 9 and 10 W. III. c. 32.—^v Randolph’s Pref. p. 15.

“ in Mr. Burgess’s armour,” speak of indecent and violent attacks on the national liturgy, and of contempt of subsisting laws. I believe that church ministers have in general been censured, not for their conscientious belief in church doctrines, but for delivering discourses not conformable to them.

“ The respect that is due from man to man
 “ must involve such a breach of it in *general*
 “ disapprobation,” (of it? of what? of respect? *i. e.* of itself: I cannot understand you) “ though the greatness of the animosity
 “ you complain of, and which conveys in it
 “ something personal, I am an entire stranger to, either in sentiment or report.”²

In no passage of my letters did I mean to be personal; and in that to which you allude, it was my sole object to intreat *those who were to judge between me and you*, to divest themselves of animosity: The whole paragraph is addressed to *them*; and, what is more, I have just afterwards declared myself to be unconscious of

² Randolph’s Preface, p. 15.

of having "introduced a single expression, "tending to reflect upon your character." Had you but attended more closely, surely such a strange suspicion could never have entered your mind.

"Nor in my work does there exist such a "thought, as that Dr. Priestley *cannot* be "saved."

When you said "that with your sentiments "of Christianity, it was charity to hope that "Dr. Priestley would reascend the ladder of "faith, until it led him to the bosom of his "Saviour and God," what could I suppose to be the ground of this *charitable* wish for his reconversion, but that article of the Athanasian Creed, in which you pronounce, "that "whosoever holds not the Catholick faith, "must without doubt perish everlastingly?" If, then, I was right in interpreting this passage in your former work, by the belief you profess in your church, there certainly does exist in your work, such a thought "as "that

* Randolph's Preface, p. 16.

"that Dr. Priestley *cannot* be saved." To declare, that "he shall *without doubt* perish everlastingly," is to declare that you think there is no possibility of his salvation. Conformably to the same idea you call my interpretation of the texts, you quoted in favour of the atonement, "a *fatal* deception."

But let us suppose, that, by the passage above cited from your former work, you do not mean to pronounce *absolutely* that Dr. Priestley *cannot* be saved, without returning to a belief in the Trinity; but that, in your opinion, this probably *will* prove to be the case; how are you benefited? The sentiment is inconsistent with the decisiveness of your creed as an Athanasian: but that is not what I mean to insist upon. How are you freed from that imputation of contradictory sentiments, which I have brought against you in my former letters? You believe that Dr. Priestley's love of truth will, at the heavenly tribunal, be a valid justification of his errors; and yet you believe, that for his errors, he will be punished with the loss of eternal salvation.^b

"As

^b See my former Letter, p. 9.

“ As confused ideas, contradiction to evident truths, and subversion of our rational faculties, make no part in the faith of a Christian; so, on the other hand, reason itself will direct us not to reject *all* information, though of many things we are not informed. The truest philosophy will require us to admit the testimony of others, as one method of information, &c.”

You introduce this quotation, (with which you are so delighted, as to think it a suitable motto to your work) because it justly describes your idea of the distinction between reason and faith. How far “ confused ideas, contradiction to evident truths, and subversion of our rational faculties,” will apply to the belief of the Trinitarian, is not now my concern: I will only remark, that, from this paragraph itself, it appears that there can be no faith in revelation without the exercise of reason. “ Reason itself” says Dr. Balguy, “ will direct us not to reject all information.” Here he makes reason the supreme

* Randolph's Preface, p. 17.

preme directress. “ The truest philosophy requires us to admit the testimony of others.” In investigating testimony, we must employ our rational faculties to determine what is deserving of credit, and what not.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Your’s.

LETTER III.

REMARKS UPON YOUR PASSAGES FROM THE
ANCIENT CHRISTIAN WRITERS.

DEAR SIR,

“ WITH respect to such reputed gods
 (viz. the idols and fictitious deities
 “ of the heathens) we confess that we are
 “ atheists—but not so in our belief of the
 “ most true God, the father of justice, of tem-
 “ perance, and all other virtues;—him indeed,
 “ and the Son who came from him, and re-
 “ vealed these things to us and to the hea-
 c “ venly

“venly host, we worship and adore, together
 “with the Holy Spirit, honouring them in
 “word and in truth.”^d

I will not retort your terms, and say that you have “*mutilated*” this passage, or that you have quoted it “without deigning to examine the context;” but I will undertake to shew that you have omitted a part, and that your translation is erroneous; and afterwards leave the reader to his own conjectures as to the cause. “And we acknowledge the charge, that we are indeed atheists with respect to those gods who are so esteemed by you: but not with respect to HIM who is the MOST TRUE GOD, and Father of righteousness, soberness, and all other virtues, in whom is no mixture of wickedness whatsoever. But we worship and adore HIM, as also his Son who came from him, and taught us these things; *and the host of other good angels who follow and resemble him;*”
 “and

^d Randolph, p. 6. See also Robinson's Plea published many years before.

^e See Randolph, p. 15, 39.

“ and also the prophetic spirit, honouring
“ them in word and in truth.”^f

I really wonder that the words—“ *other good
“ angels who follow and resemble him*”—did not
(unless omitted in your edition) guard you
from rendering *και τον των αλλων στρατον* “ and
“ to the heavenly host.” Besides, how strange
would be the assertion, that Christ came upon
earth to reveal these things to a set of beings
not upon earth, the heavenly host! You surely
have not given the reader the true sense of
this passage. Justin means to say, we worship
the only true God, and the Son, and other
good angels. How does this advantage your
cause? Does not Justin, when he speaks of
the only true God, make use of the term *him*,
the single person? Could he more clearly
distinguish the Son from the only true God?
And is it not evident, from his considering

C 2

the

^f Και ομολογημεν των τοιςτων νομιζομενων θεων αθεοι ειναι, αλλ’
ουχι τε αληθεατε, και πατρος δικαιοσυνης και σωφροσυνης, και των
αλλων αρετων, ανεπιμικτης τε κακίας θεος· αλλ’ εκεινον τε και τον των
αλλων επομενων και εξομοιουμενων αγαθων αγγελων στρατον, πνευμα τε το
προφητικον, σεβομεθα και προσκυνουμεν, λογω και αληθεια τιμουμεν.
Justin Martyr, Apol. 2, folio edit. p. 56.

the Son but as one of the good angels to be worshipped, he uses the terms σεβόμεθα, προσκυνούμεν, in the *highest* sense when applied to the Father, but in the inferior when applied to the Son?^s

Hence it appears, that although Justin thought Christ to be a God, yet he looked upon him as subordinate to the Supreme, and classes him amongst his messengers. If therefore it be allowed that Justin here presents Antoninus "with a compleat summary of " the Christian faith," that faith was not *Trinitarian*, a circumstance essential to the establishment of your hypothesis.

But it is manifest by the context, that Justin in this passage describes only the faith of himself and those of his own persuasion. " Perhaps it will be said (continues he) that " some of the accused Christians have been " convicted of crimes. That this is true with " respect to many I will admit, but these were " not

^s See this observation more at large in Mr. Lindsey's " Examination of Robinson's Plea," p. 125.

“ not amongst Christians of the *above-men-*
 “ *tioned description*. We are all called *Chri-*
 “ *tians*, however we disagree in our doctrines,
 “ just as amongst the Greeks all are called
 “ *philosophers*, notwithstanding the difference
 “ of their opinions.” To this effect has the
 pious father spoken in the very page from
 which you borrowed your quotation.

“ Therefore (says he) the Jews, thinking it
 “ was always the Father of all things who
 “ conversed with Moses, when it was the Son,
 “ who is named both angel and messenger, are
 “ justly censured by the Holy Spirit, and by
 “ Christ himself, as being ignorant both of
 “ the Father and Son: for they that say the
 “ Son is the Father, appear neither to know
 “ the Father, nor that the Father hath a Son,
 “ *who being the first-born of God, is also God.*”^h

Not to know the Son from the Father, is
 mentioned by Justin as an instance of great
 ignorance, and the Son he denominates a
 God, because he was *the first-born of God*.

c 2

Does

^h Randolph, p. 8.

Does this make the Son equal to, or of the same substance with the Father? Certainly not. Neither does your Nicene creed, which you have here brought forward as corresponding with the doctrine maintained by these words of Justin. This is an Arian creed, the Athanasian is Trinitarian, and that of the Apostles may be pronounced by a great part of the Humanitarians, as far as it respects Christ. O most profound Church of England! After reconciling to your belief a trinity in unity, ought I to be surprised that you receive into your liturgy three contradictory creeds?

“ And a positive assent to the direction of
 “ our Saviour himself, that all men should ho-
 “ nour him, even as they honour the Father.”ⁱ

That Justin might assent to the doctrine, that “ all men should honour the Son, even
 “ as they honour the Father,” and yet not be a Trinitarian, I have already attempted to prove, and you have not thought proper to reply to it.^k

ⁱ Randolph, p. 9.

^k See my former Letters, p. 228.

“ Justin, in his dialogue with Trypho, applies to Jesus the scriptural terms of *King*,
“ *Priest, God, Lord, Angel or Messenger, &c.*”¹

When Justin speaks of Christ as God, because he was the *Son of the only unbegotten and undescribable God*, or calls him a *King* or a *Priest, &c.* who existed before the world began, and condescended to be born of a virgin, is there in this language any thing incompatible with Dr. Priestley’s account of Justin’s opinion respecting Christ?

“ The very baptismal form and words of
“ of our church, is adduced as a regenerating
“ sign of a Christian’s faith, &c.”^{2m}

I shall give from Justin the passage to which you allude—“ Then are they dipped in water
“ in the name of the Parent of all things and
“ the Sovereign God, and in the name of our
“ Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.”
Because, in the words of your church, you baptise in the name of the Father, the Son,
and

¹ Randolph, p. 10.

^m Randolph, p. 14.

and Holy Ghost, and you hold them all equally omnipotent, and though three persons constituting but one God; therefore Justin, by the sentence above quoted, has the same meaning. The phrase "to baptise in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," does not, as I have shewn in my former letters, p. 211, necessarily carry with it the construction of your church; and therefore had Justin used the form of your church, word for word, I would not have admitted it as evidence of the same belief as your church. But Justin is the best interpreter of Justin. In the same page he explains his meaning most clearly. The object of baptism he tells us is regeneration, which he explains to be a total reform of life and manners through repentance. "Leading him who is to be baptised to the font, we call upon (says he) the name of the Parent of the universe and the Lord God. He who is baptised, is baptised also in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who by the prophets foretold what relates to Christ."ⁿ

ⁿ Justin Apol. 2, folio edit. p. 94.

When Justin distinguishes Christ from the Lord God, and gives as a reason for baptizing in the name of Christ, that he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; does it follow that Justin regards Christ as a Divinity, equal to, and of one substance with the Father? Would not this be a most unwarrantable inference?

In page 40 of my letters, I offered a quotation from Justin to make it appear, that he never intended to say that the people of his time entertained the same belief as to the Godhead of Christ. "I shall tell you (says Justin) plain fact, without any art or embellishment of words, for which I have no talent; but it hath pleased God, of his especial favor, to impart to me the gift of understanding his scriptures, and of this his grace to me, I call upon all to partake freely and without reward, lest, for not communicating so great a benefit, I should myself be condemned, &c."

This is what Justin says to Trypho, in defence of himself, for asserting an opinion so unheard-

unheard-of to the Jew as Christ's being more than man. Upon this passage I asked the question; whether Justin, if the general sentiment of his day had been the same as his own, would have taken up the idea, that "God had of his especial favor imparted to him the gift of understanding the scriptures, and that it was his duty to call upon others to partake of this his grace, lest he should incur the displeasure of God." To this reasoning you have offered no objection: but notwithstanding this decisive passage, you have denied that Justin ever declared himself to have received "supernatural assistance." And yet there is a contradiction even in the passage in which you make this denial. "The fundamental article of a Christian's belief, the *Divinity of his Saviour*, was the firm and rooted belief of Justin, to which he arrived not by any *supernatural assistance*, but by searching, with the humility of a Christian convert, those sacred records, which, *through the assistance of divine grace*, had led him into the ways of truth, &c."

Having

• Randolph, p. 22.

Having noticed this inconsistency in *you*, let me repel a charge of the same kind against *me*. In your note subjoined to the above passage, you say, that “ if the Platonic doctrine had opened Justin’s eyes to the sense of the scriptures, the immediate inspiration of heaven was surely unnecessary to unfold their meaning.” Had I spoken to this effect, it would indeed have been an inconsistency; but I need not call to your remembrance, that I represented Justin to have *fancied* himself under divine influence; for even when you are bringing forward your accusation, you use the same term, and say, “ Mr. Hobhouse, to invalidate the testimony of Justin, says, he was one who *fancied* himself to be favored with supernatural assistance.”

We now come to the passage which it seems I have *mutilated*: “ Now, Trypho, I do not fail in my proof, that this is the Christ of God, though I should not be able to shew both that he pre-existed the Son of the Creator of all things, *being God; and that he was begotten man of the virgin.* - - -

- - - - - For there
“ are

“ are even some of *our sort*, who confess him
 “ to be the Christ, and yet affirm that he is
 “ man of men. I am not of the same opi-
 “ nion with these men, nor are there many
 “ of my persuasion, who will say as they do.
 “ For we are exhorted by Christ, not to give
 “ ourselves up to human arguments or doc-
 “ trines, but to those which were preached by
 “ the holy prophets and taught by himself.”^p

Permit me to introduce a translation of the
 latter part of this passage, from Mr. Lindsey's
 examination of Robinson's Plea, p. 192, 3,
 &c. which translation, if good, puts an end
 at once to all your reasoning. “ *For some of*
 “ *our race, my friends, (meaning heathen con-*
 “ *verts like himself) who confess him to be the*
 “ *Christ, do yet affirm him to be only a man of*
 “ *men: to whom I do not assent, though the*
 “ *greatest part of them should say that they*
 “ *have been of the same opinion: since it is*
 “ *the injunction of Christ, that we are not to listen*
 “ *to the commands of men, but to the things that*
 “ *have been delivered by the holy prophets, and*
 “ *by*

^p Randolph, p. 16.

“ *by Christ himself.*” Mr. Lindsey, after having given this translation, does not, like you, sir, take no notice that a part of the last sentence is by some rendered differently. He owns that there is a doubt amongst the learned, whether Justin here assert, that the opinion of Christ, being a man like all others, was held by the greatest part of Christians, or that the greater part agreed in his sentiment of the pre-existence. Mr. Lindsey thinks that both the words and context favor the former opinion, and most surely they do. Οἷς ἔ συν-
τιθεμαι· ἔδ’ αν πλειστοι ταυτα μοι δοξασαντες ειποιεν
may very properly receive the following construction, *with whom I do not agree, nor should I, though the greater part &c.*

Let us now consider the context.—Trypho says, that Justin’s position was different from the common opinion (παράδοξος, *præter, seu contra omnium opinionem.*) If the doctrine of Christ’s pre-existence had been the general belief, would Justin have introduced his Jew speaking this language, or have been so doubtful whether he could prove his point?

Why,

Why, sir, did you not notice, that in your quotation there was a controverted passage? When an author takes up his pen in the almost exhausted state of a controversy, we naturally expect that he will notice the different translations, and assign the grounds of his preference;—we naturally conclude that he has something new to offer upon the subject, not that he will only walk in the beaten track.

It may not be improper here to comment upon what you have said in another part. As a reason for not mentioning that Eusebius gave a different representation of Polycarp's last prayer, you say, "but you seem to forget that, when a quotation is fairly applied from an allowed historical record, you must either admit the testimony, or bring sufficient proofs of its incongruity."⁹

All this amounts to no more, than that the words of an allowed historical record must stand, and may be fairly quoted, until there shall appear reason to doubt whether they be correct.

⁹ Randolph, p. 27.

correct. Most assuredly, sir: but in this case every person who was acquainted with Eusebius, must have known that there was reason to doubt the accuracy of Russel's account, and therefore every such person would have thought it incumbent upon him, before he drew his inference, to establish (if he could) the genuineness of the reading he adopted; or (if he could not) to establish his own inference according to *either* reading. This he doubtless would have done in imitation of Logicians; who, if they know that their premises may be disputed, try to prove their validity before they draw any conclusion; he would have anticipated and made an effort to refute the objection, with a view to preclude the adversary from availing himself of it. Would not a skilful combatant, conscious of his strength, have thus conducted himself?

“ There are then, (says he) and have been,
 “ many proselytes to Christianity, who have
 “ been taught atheistical and blasphemous
 “ tenets and practices. Some of them teach
 “ one way, and others another, of blaspheming the Maker of the Universe, and Christ
 “ whom

“whom he had foretold should come, *even*
 “*the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* We
 “communicate with none of these, &c. Some
 “of them are called Marcionites, some Valen-
 “tinians, some Basilidians, some Saturni-
 “lians, &c.”

Christ, and the God of Abraham, &c. are cer-
 tainly applied to one and the same person, to
 him *who was to come.* Justin's opinion was
 that “Christ, an inferior god, the agent by
 “whom the Supreme formed and rules the
 “universe, was the Jehovah who appeared to
 “Moses, and called himself the *God of Abra-*
 “*ham, Isaac, and Jacob.*” Justin therefore,
 in speaking of Christ as the *God of Abraham,*
 &c. maintains no tenets inconsistent with
 those

* Randolph, p. 20.

A sufficient illustration of it is seen in the following
 passage: “Returning to the scriptures, I will endeavour to
 “persuade you, that he who appeared to Abraham, Isaac,
 “and Jacob, and Moses, and is called God, is different from
 “that God who created all things, in number however I
 “mean, not in sentiment: for I say, that he never has done
 “any thing, but what He who made the world, over whom
 “there is no other God, willed that he should do, and say.”
 Justin's Dialog. folio edit. p. 276.

those attributed to him by Dr. Priestley. If then Justin's faith were "that of the Christian church in those days," it was not a *Trinitarian* church.

But the fact is this:—Justin only declares, that he and other Christians held no communion with the Gnostics, not that other Christians acknowledged the same system of "faith, which he undertakes to defend." Indeed he had *before* said that *all* were called *Christians*, however they disagreed in doctrine: and he *now* only signifies the general dislike to the Gnostics, who in his opinion deserved not the name of *Christians*. He specifies no other than the Gnostics, viz. the Marcionites, Valentinians, &c.

With the passage I have just examined, you take your leave of Justin's writings; and if you have no better proofs that his sentiments were agreeable to the doctrines of your church, your close examination of Bishop Bull's writings, and your long studies in your Family Expository, afford only a stronger evidence of the weakness of your cause.

D

" I trust

“ I trust that, without the imputation of
 “ arrogance, I may now reject as erroneous
 “ your opinions with respect to Justin,” and
 I proceed to enquire, whether you have been
 more successful in your appeal to Polycarp.

As you had brought forward from Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, the following passage: “ for whosoever does not confess that
 “ Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, &c.” I entered into a full explanation of it. This explanation is said to be “ plausible;” but as you are disposed, instead of attempting to refute it, quietly “ to leave the separate merits
 “ or imperfections of our reasoning to the
 “ decision of the reader,” let it be so.

I will here beg leave to make a remark or two upon your note, p. 55. “ In giving the
 “ old Latin translation of the *first* passage, Mr.
 “ H. observes,—If he (Christ) had not come
 “ in the flesh, (which expression, as ~~he~~ understood by the Jews, has been shewn to
 “ mean, *if he had not been a man*) I would
 “ therefore

* Randolph, p. 22.

“ therefore beg leave to ask him, where such
 “ proof has been given? I remember a re-
 “ quest of Dr. Horsley, in reply to a similar
 “ assertion from Dr. Priestley, that he would
 “ produce one instance where the whole
 “ phrase of *coming in the flesh* was applied to
 “ the birth or appearance of any *mere man*.
 “ I do not recollect to have ever seen that re-
 “ quest granted.”

I cannot say, sir, whether there be any in-
 stance in which the whole phrase, *coming in
 the flesh*, is applied to the birth or appearance
 of any mere man; nor do I think such an
 instance necessary, in deciding whether the
 phrase imply a deposition of one state of be-
 ing, and an assumption of another. In my
 former work, I gave you an instance, in which
 εν σαρκι is a mere expletive. *For I would ye
 knew what great conflict I have for you, and for
 as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.*
 Col. chap. ii. v. 1. *Come in the flesh* may as
 well mean no more than *come*, as *see my face
 in the flesh* mean no more than *see my face*.
 If therefore you will not allow that Polycarp,
 when he says *for whosoever does not confess that*
 D 2 Jesus

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, inserts the terms *in the flesh* from a design to point particularly at the Gnostics, I can see no reason why you should not admit these words to be expletives in conformity to the idiom of the Jewish language.

But to prove that Polycarp was not an Humanitarian, you have recourse to another method. "Polycarp, at the close of his letter, "refers to the letters of Ignatius."

Whether we have the letters of Ignatius to which Polycarp refers, is the question. I will only repeat to you, what I have before said:
 "Many very learned men contend for the genuineness of *some* of the works, which bear the name of Ignatius: others, some of whom believed in the pre-existence of Christ, insist upon it that all are spurious." Until this question can be fully determined, it appears to me that no use can be made of "these beautiful and curious remains of Apostolical antiquity," as you are pleased to term the

" See my Letters, p. 200.

the writings ascribed to "the good Ignatius." When you attempt to prove Polycarp's opinions respecting Christ, not from his own letter, but from letters to which he refers, and the genuineness of which you must know to be disputed, will it not be thought that your cause is weak?

"And what *is still more extraordinary*, the
 "very *miraculous* parts of the narration, with
 "which you endeavour to shake the veracity
 "of Pionius, are enumerated *word for word*
 "in the *more credible* relation of Eusebius."^x

If you refer to my Letters, you will perceive that your charge of inconsistency is but ill supported, and therefore your attempt at irony is as unseasonable as it is feeble. I have not said that the veracity of Eusebius is more to be depended upon than that of Pionius. I stated, that the former had given a relation of Polycarp's last prayer different from the latter, and added, that you ought to have established the genuineness of Pionius's

D 3

account,

^x Randolph, p. 28.

account, before you reasoned upon it. Nay, I pronounced it an uncertainty, whether Eusebius had given us the actual words of the dying Bishop.

But although I have, in no part of my work, presumed that Eusebius is more deserving of credit than Pionius, I have given a reason, independent on the character of either author, for preferring the reading of Eusebius. "It must, however, be confessed, "that, of the two readings, Eusebius has "most probably given us that which comes "nearest to the prayer offered by Polycarp; "who, in the conclusion of his epistle to the "Philippians, thus supplicates God in their "behalf: " "May the God and Father of our " Lord Jesus Christ, and he himself *our ever-* " *lasting High-Priest*, the Son of God, Jesus " Christ, &c."

" So that without having consulted the au-
" thor to whom you trust, &c."

This

† See my former Letters, p. 163.

‡ Randolph, p. 138.

This assertion is absolutely false, but yet not more unwarrantable than many others which might be adduced. “ You *will not* believe that he could have pre-existed, and therefore the expression must be figurative.”^a — But yours happens to be the true one, and therefore the other must be *bent* to a similar construction.”^b — “ The Jews took up stones to cast at him, because they did not believe his words: and all your difficulties, sir, arise from the same cause.”^c These last words amount to a declaration, that I do not believe the religion I profess. But although you may, in effect, have told me that I am a hypocrite, the assertion is not at all inconsistent with the unqualified testimony you bear to the honesty of my mind: “ for a man’s private character has no concern with his printed arguments.”^d This article of morality is not, I think, to be found in the Christian code.

“ What, sir, glory to the Son, and that in an equal degree with the Father? (for the words

^a Randolph, p. 108.

^b Randolph, p. 138.

^c Randolph, p. 112.

^d Randolph, p. 29.

“ words are, TO THEE TOGETHER
 “ WITH HIM, &c.”^e

I before intimated, that this doxology was very questionable: there is one satisfactory ground upon which it appears to me an interpolation. It is quite a tautology: *I glorify thee, through the eternal high-priest Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, through whom to thee, &c.* This is but a repetition of ascribing glory to the Father through Christ. But, if this doxology were unquestionably used by Polycarp, I think my interpretation not at all shaken by your remark. Because glory is to be rendered to Christ *together with* God, is an *equal* degree of glory implied?

“ And we are to presume, I imagine, that
 “ *ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ*, in the Holy Spirit, and
 “ which you will observe also, without any
 “ breach of classical propriety, might be ren-
 “ dered *with*, &c.”^f

By telling me that a word may be used in two senses, you do not shew the impropriety

^e Randolph, p. 29.

^f Ibid.

of my having adopted *one* of them; but give me the choice of *both*. Conformably to the same mode of arguing, I might tell you, that without breach of classical propriety, *ev* may be rendered *by*; and according to Mr. Whiston, who has offered many reasons against *with*, this is the best interpretation, and perhaps he is right.

“ But a more unexceptionable testimony
 “ still remains, and that is, the confession of
 “ the Smyrneans themselves. They close their
 “ narrative with these words: Brethren, we
 “ wish you all health, and to walk in the word
 “ of Jesus Christ, according to the gospel,
 “ *with* whom be glory to God, *both* the Father
 “ and the Holy Ghost.”^z

Let this letter be deemed the production of the church of Smyrna, and there is sufficient room to doubt the authenticity of this passage, since, by your own confession, “ it is omitted in the narration of Eusebius;” and therefore you surely should not have called it an *unexceptionable*

^z Randolph, p. 30.

ceptionable testimony of the manner in which the Smyrneans understood their bishop.

But you think to have gained an advantage over me another way. The form of your argument is this:—*You confess this letter to be the work of Pionius; hence it may be considered as a proof of his own faith: he, therefore, may be produced as an instance of one who acknowledged the divinity of Christ before the time of Justin.* But, sir, when, from the omission in Eusebius, you so naturally concluded, that I should doubt the close of this epistle, supposing it to be written by the church at Smyrna; I wonder that you did not pursue your train of reasoning a little further, and foresee that I should equally suspect the same passage, supposing this letter to be the work of Pionius; for he lived, as you rightly inform us, long before the time of Eusebius.

“ I would also add, that the character of
 “ Pionius, as given by Eusebius, is such as
 “ would make one cautious of doubting his
 “ testimony.”^h

^h Randolph, p. 31, note.

You may believe Pionius, when he says, that he actually received a visit from Polycarp's ghost. *Credat Judeus Apella, non ego*; "for it requires a more capacious credulity than any *reasonable man* would, I think, wish to possess." I will not, however, suspect the good man of inventing this tale. Perhaps he mistook a dream for a reality.

"And even if we suppose him, (Pionius) through religious zeal, to have exaggerated the miraculous occurrences of Polycarp's death, &c."¹

Is not this a little inconsistent with the high character you just before attributed to Pionius? If his religion evidenced itself in lying, must he not have been a very great knave?

"The words *σεβειν* and *προσκυνειν*, are frequently used, &c."²

After declaring, that my remarks on the different meanings of these words are "beneath

¹ Randolph, p. 31, note.

² Randolph, p. 32.

“neath a school-boy,” you allow that they may be used in the sense I have given. Is this the way you “put my criticism to the blush?”

But to prove that the Greek words are not *in this place* employed in the *secondary* sense, you say that worship is offered to Christ as *the Son of God*. Permit me to repeat “that this appellation may have been given to him as the Messiah, the common signification of *Son of God*, amongst the first converts to Christianity, or on account of his eminent wisdom and sanctity.”¹ To this, as well as to many other parts of my reply, you oppose nothing but language of a very positive and uninstrueting kind, *namely*, “that with the liberty of interpretation I assume, there hardly exists, in any language, an expression that may not be perverted from its obvious meaning,” &c. &c.

“But, sir, we can proceed a step farther in opposition to this *extraordinary criticism*; we
“can

¹ See my former Letters, p. 168.

" can silence every doubt of opinion with the
 " *imperious tone of fact*. We can prove, that
 " adoration *was* paid by the community of
 " Christians to their Saviour, long before the
 " tragical end of Polycarp furnished us with
 " the short and interesting narrative. There
 " is a letter still extant of Pliny the younger
 " to Trajan, in which he affirms, that the
 " Christians were accustomed to assemble on
 " an appointed day, before day-light, and al-
 " ternately *sing hymns to Christ as God*."^m

Mr. Robinson, in his Plea, probably may
 have supplied you with this *imperious fact*,
 and Mr. Lindsey, in his Examination,ⁿ has
 supplied me with an answer. An attentive
 and candid perusal of what he has advanced
 upon this subject will, I believe, lead to a
 conviction, that this evidence is not *quite so*
stubborn as it appears to your mind. I feel
 tempted to insert a long extract, because it is
 so satisfactory: but I am restrained by the
 apprehension of filling my book with quota-
 tions, with which the reader is probably not
 unacquainted,

^m Randolph, p. 35.

ⁿ P. 119, 120, 121.

unacquainted, although they have not even been *mentioned* by you. I am really tired with having so often desired you to recollect the replies which have already been made to your *borrowed* remarks.

“ But you see nothing extraordinary in
 “ this change; and though Irenæus plunges
 “ from the simplicity of Humanitarianism to
 “ the depth of *Trinitarian idolatry*; though
 “ he abandons at once all the plain instruc-
 “ tions of his religious teacher, for the *won-*
 “ *derful and mysterious doctrines* of the *philo-*
 “ *phizing* Justin,” &c.

You profess, by this passage, to shew the absurdity of the change I suppose to have taken place in the mind of Irenæus, but your statement is not correct. I have not contended that Justin was a *Trinitarian*; I have represented him to have asserted the Son to be a divinity, but inferior to the Father from whom he derived all his powers. You might likewise have known, that the doctrine of the full equality of the Son to the Father is

• Randolph, p. 37.

is not thought by Humanitarians to have taken place until the latter end of the fourth century.^p

But, doubtless, you will say, is not such a change, as that which you *allow*, extremely strange? How came Irenæus to desert the instructions of Polycarp, who had conversed with the apostle John, for the new opinion of Justin?

I have already observed, that Irenæus entertained a high opinion of Justin, and believed, perhaps, his account of having received supernatural assistance in interpreting the scriptures.^q Hence he may have been led to think that Justin had given a *happy explanation* of the doctrine delivered by the Apostles and Polycarp. Those plain men, when they taught that Jesus was a man, by whom the Father, *who dwelled in him*, performed miracles, had no other idea of him than of a human being aided by God. Justin and the philosophers, endeavouring to investigate the operations

^p See my former Letters, p. 23.

^q Ibid. p. 172.

operations of Deity, ascribed the power by which such wonders were wrought to a ray of divinity, *occasionally* communicated to the ancient prophets, and withdrawn again, but at length *permanently* annexed to Jesus of Nazareth, who was therefore thought to be divine, though but in a low degree. Thus imagining that they had only *explained*, not *altered*, the doctrines of the Apostles and Polycarp, they contended that they were advocates for the same faith. Attend but to this idea, sir, and you will not be at a loss to discover the reason why Irenæus, instead of “endeavour-
 “ing to account for the *errors* of his humanitarian master, should appeal to him for
 “the confirmation of his own tenets.” It seems, at first sight, strange that men, who believed a divine ray to have been *permanently* united to the man Jesus, should contend that they held the same opinion as the Apostles and Polycarp, who spoke of Jesus no otherwise than as *a man approved of God by signs and wonders*: but when we recollect that the same pretensions to the true apostolic faith are uniformly

* Randolph, p. 39, 40.

formly made by the Arians, and even Trinitarians of the present day, the wonder ceases.

I believe it will be thought, sir, that you are *now* furnished "with a decisive solution" to the difficulties which you imagined you had started; whilst my questions remain in full force. "If Polycarp had instructed Irenæus "in the doctrine of Christ's divinity, would "not the latter, when he was speaking in an "exalted manner of the author of his faith, "have made *particular mention*, that the same "doctrine was communicated to him by the "venerable Bishop of Smyrna, the disciple "of John? Would he not likewise have expressed a doubt about the reality of the "particular revelation of Justin, and contended that there could be no necessity for "such a divine communication, since he had "himself received the same truth from Polycarp, and Polycarp from the apostle John?"¹

"I may now, I think, safely leave your "comparison of the two creeds," &c.²

E

I must

¹ Ibid. p. 173.

² Randolph, p. 41.

I must still insist, that if the author had intended to exhibit, in each of these creeds, a summary of the faith of any church, they would not only have consisted of the same articles, but agreed in words. I really wonder, sir, that you can perceive no *difference* between them. In the *one*, God made the world *by Jesus Christ*; in the *other*, he is not represented to have employed any *agent*. In the *one*, Christ is said to have been *by himself* united to man; in the *other*, it is not declared to have been done by *his own* power. How you can make it appear, that *either* affords "a convincing evidence" of the agreement between the doctrines of the earliest ages of Christianity, and the faith of the present church of England, I am entirely at a loss to discover.

"The quotation of the passage from Tertullian - - - would call for no answer, after what has been advanced by Dr. Priestley, and replied to by Dr. Horsley, had it not &c."

I wish

^u Randolph, p. 42.

I wish that this instance of your conduct had been more general; I wish that when you *confessedly* advanced *old matter*, with a view to give *me* information, you had afforded *additional* proofs of *your own* knowledge, by commenting upon the answers which others have already given. Thus the public would not have found in *your* book, and consequently in *mine*, so much which has been submitted to them before.

“ The *major pars credentium*, rendered, as it should be, the greater part of *believers*, not the greater part of *Christians*, would have suggested to you, that Tertullian is not talking of Christians, but heretics, &c.”*

According to you, sir, *credentium*, believers, means heretics, or those whom Tertullian would have ranked amongst the class of *incredentium*, or unbelievers. If I were inclined to copy your language, I should tell you, “ that you corrupt the very spirit of language, &c.”

E 2

Further,

* Randolph, p. 44.

Further, let us see what would be the *sense* of this passage, supposing Tertullian to have alluded to heretics by the term *credentium*. "The unlearned and the ignorant, of whom "the greater part of *heretics* always consists," &c. Is it then his idea, that amongst *heretics* only, not amongst those who belong to the *church*, the greater part is unlearned and ignorant? No, no, sir, Tertullian could never have made so ridiculous an assertion.

Upon reconsidering this passage, I agree with you, that *credentium* should rather have been translated *believers* than *Christians*; not, however, for the strange reason which you have assigned, but because it appears to be only a general assertion, that the major part of believers in *any* religion must consist of the unlearned. If I be right in this notion, (and the word *semper* renders it past doubt) then Tertullian plainly intimates that the great body of the people professed the belief of Praxeas.

But it seems that this point, though proved, is of no use to the Humanitarian. Praxeas
was

was a *Patripassian*, not an *Humanitarian*. Mr. Kett has said so; and you, sir, have afforded him your sanction.

“ And when you assert that Tertullian allows that Praxeas did not say that the Father was crucified and died, I must again accuse you of want of attention to the subject you are discussing.”

An excellent argument, indeed, sir, you have brought forward, for the sake of making good this charge. Tertullian “ is reducing Praxeas to an absurdity,” and attempting to shew that, although Praxeas “ was afraid to say that the Father was *passible*,” still it followed from his acknowledgment that he was *compassible*. *Times dicere passibilem quem dicis compassibilem*. Let me now ask you, sir, does not Tertullian, both by *express words* and by his method of reasoning, allow Praxeas not to have been a *Patripassian*? If, with a view to point out to you the absurdity of the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, I tell

E 3

you,

^v Randolph, p. 45.

you, that “ although you are afraid to declare” *one to be three, and three to be one*, yet it follows from that doctrine; this is an endeavor to prove that your notion of a Triune God involves an absurdity, not that you believe that absurdity. The very endeavor, indeed, *presumes* the contrary; for otherwise it would be the greatest absurdity in me to attempt to convince you, by means, which to my own knowledge could not possibly be attended with success.

I may now, I think, venture to question whether Mr. Kett, upon whom you bestow so much praise for his Bampton Lectures,² will
be

² I cannot but remark, that whilst Mr. R. can discover nothing to praise in Mr. Porter, Mr. Jardine, Dr. Priestley, or any writer who disagrees in sentiment with himself, every *Trinitarian* author he admires with rapture. He refers to his Family Expository by the late President of Corpus, and to Bishop Bull, “ for the best explanation of Justin’s sentiments;” he cannot refrain “ from paying Mr. Whitaker “ that tribute of admiration for acuteness of penetration, “ and depth of research, which he deserves from the whole “ Christian world.”—Mr. Jones’s Answer to Bishop Clayton’s Essay on Spirit, “ is a most ingenious and masterly “ piece of critical divinity.”—Mr. Kett’s Bampton Lectures do

be ready to return the compliment for your defence of him.

“ Above all, I would recommend to your perusal Tertullian’s opinion of heretics, among *which* (perhaps *whom* would be better) Praxeas is reckoned, in which you may find some lessons applicable to the present day.”^a

I wish that you had been so explicit as to have pointed out the parts to which you allude. Tertullian, in this work, professes to expose the obstinacy, the hypocrisy, and the evil lives of heretics. It certainly cannot be your meaning to assign the same character to the Dissenters of these times.

Permit me now in my turn to recommend, by way of “ lesson,” not any work of considerable

do *justice* to the cause of Christianity, “ as they do *credit* to the talents and zeal of its defender.”—“ The believer in the Divinity of our Saviour will have to thank Mr. Hawker, the able defender of it, for placing his faith on a foundation that may bid defiance to the attack of its adversaries.”

^a Randolph, p. 48.

derable length *generally* so that it shall be impossible to discover my allusion, but a *particular* passage from the writings of Justin. He tells Antoninus, that the Christians ought not to have been punished because they were *Christians*. “Neither praise, nor blame, says he, ought to be annexed to any person on account of his religious denomination; but it should be enquired whether his actions have been virtuous or vicious.”^b Let all those who would not only continue a class of men in a *degraded* state, but subject them to *punishment* on account of their *opinions*, read this liberal sentiment, and take shame to themselves for the narrowness of their conduct.

You next pass to my observations on the reputed epistle of Barnabas. I have said—
 “Since there is nothing certain about this
 “epistle, but that it came out *after* the destruc-
 “tion of Jerusalem, the overthrow of which
 “is there mentioned; and *before* the year 200,
 “about which time Clemens Alexandrinus
 “wrote,” &c. it might therefore have made its
 appearance

^b Justin, folio edit. Apol. I, p. 54.

“ appearance after 140, when Justin’s work was given to the world.” You assign as a reason why this forgery was not practised *after* the time of Justin, that no mention is made of him, which certainly would have been the case if it had come out after this celebrated heathen convert had published his doctrines.* By this reasoning you imagine the writer of this epistle to be destitute even of common sense. He wants to pass his book as the production of Barnabas, who lived many years before Justin; and yet he mentions Justin, that his imposture may be detected. This comes of your attempt to shew that the reputed epistle of Barnabas was published *before* the time of Justin. Let me reason now after the same form, but I hope with greater validity, to make it appear that this work probably did *not* come out *before* the time of Justin. Clemens Alexandrinus, who wrote, as we have seen, about the year 200, mentions this work. Had it made its appearance before A. D. 140, is it not highly probable that Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, or
some

* Randolph, p. 53.

some of the other early writers, would have noticed it before Clemens?

Let me now examine another method by which you aim to establish the probability that the epistle in question, allowing it to be spurious, was not published *after* the time of Justin.

“ For to believe (and if there be any weight
 “ in your supposition, we are constrained to
 “ believe it) that 140 years after the death of
 “ our Saviour, and the progressive establish-
 “ ment of the Christian faith in almost every
 “ part of the known world; after the pro-
 “ mulgation of doctrines delivered by the
 “ Apostles to the several churches, and
 “ guarded with the utmost zeal and vigilance
 “ by their co-adjutors and successors; to be-
 “ lieve, I say, that, *in less than half that time,*
 “ a converted heathen should entirely over-
 “ turn the system of faith, and effect so total
 “ a change in the sentiments of the Christian
 “ world, that no disciple of the Apostles could
 “ be found bold enough to step forward and
 “ oppose his *blasphemous tenets*;—that with a
 “ sweeping

“sweeping hand of innovation, he should at
 “once have destroyed every vestige of *Unita-*
 “*rian simplicity*, and brought over its fol-
 “lowers to the altars of *Trinitarian idolatry*;
 “—that Polycarp, who underwent a cruel
 “death as well as Justin, in support of his
 “faith, who was alive when Justin published,
 “and defended the doctrine of the Son’s di-
 “vinity;—that this venerable bishop, dying
 “as you alledge in the profession of *Huma-*
 “*nitarian* sentiments, should never have ut-
 “tered a syllable against this dangerous and
 “increasing heresy, requires a credulity *more*
 “*capacious* than any *reasonable* man would, I
 “think, wish to possess.”^d

If I understand this *sublime* passage, it is
 your intention to point out how great an ab-
 surdity I am constrained to believe, if I hold
 this letter to have been forged after the year
 140;—*namely*, that I am constrained to believe
 the whole Christian world to have been, in
less than the half of 140 years, converted from
 Unitarianism to Trinitarianism. How does
 this

^d Randolph, p. 53.

this follow? Not from my notion that Justin first elevated Christ into a Divinity, though an inferior Divinity to the Father; for I maintain that the error of Justin *gradually* gained ground, and that the doctrine of the Trinity was not introduced until the latter end of the fourth century. But I suppose it follows thus: the writer of the epistle in question represents the Christian world to be *Trinitarian*; if he wrote between the years 140 and 200, then the conversion of the world from *Unitarian simplicity* to *Trinitarian idolatry* took place *in less than the half* of 140 years. Is not this the form of your argument?

It is not to be forgotten, that, according to the supposition on both sides, this writer designed to impose upon the world his own work as the production of Barnabas; thus whatever account he has given of the sentiments professed by the Christian world, it relates *to the time of Barnabas*, and can therefore be no evidence of those which prevailed at the time the forgery was committed.

“ But

“ But the testimony of Clemens Romanus
 “ not being so positive in its affirmation as
 “ that of Barnabas, Ignatius, or Irenæus, is
 “ *allowed to be genuine, and confessedly the work*
 “ of this fellow-labourer with the Apostles.”

Away, away, fir, with such *unworthy* in-
 sinuations.

“ *The sceptre of the majesty of God, &c.*”

You say that, in my reply to your construc-
 tion of this passage, I have not brought “ the
 “ shadow of an argument, except it be the
 “ opinion of Dr. Priestley, that *it means no*
 “ *such thing.*”^e What could induce you to
 hazard this declaration? Have I not examined
 the passage, part by part, and offered reasons
 in justification of my interpretation? Those
 reasons you oppose, in your usual manner, by
 saying, “ Does not Clemens evidently allude
 “ to some exalted means or power Christ had
 “ in possession, and consented to lay aside?
 “ I am willing to abide by what I have al-
 “ ready

^e Randolph, p. 55, 56. ^f Ibid. p. 57. ^z Ibid. p. 58.

“ ready advanced, without feeling the smallest
 “ apprehension from the weight or success of
 “ your criticism.”^h

“ I would only suggest to you one reflection,
 “ and which I think an important one, that
 “ if you allow Christ, as a *mere agent* of al-
 “ mighty direction, to have possessed *more*
 “ power than he *thought proper to exert*, you
 “ make the Creator refer to an instrument of
 “ his will the *choice* of pursuing his omnipo-
 “ tent designs,”ⁱ &c.

When I said “ that Christ, who could do
 “ *all things* by virtue of the power of the Fa-
 “ ther who dwelt in him, preferred a low
 “ condition to that of a great prince,”^k my
 meaning, I think, was obvious. Christ,
 though the Father was pleased to reside in
 him, and enable him to do all things, was not
 elated with pride: his inclination and sense
 of duty were in perfect unison; he was *con-*
tented with his low condition of life. I surely
 left not the *choice* of thwarting the designs of
 Omnipotence

^h Randolph, p. 59. ⁱ Ibid.

^k See my former Letters, p. 187.

Omnipotence to one, who could do all things *only* by virtue of the power of the Father who dwelt in him.¹

In reply to the following passage I adduced from Clemens, "The Apostles preached the
" gospel to us under a commission from the
" Lord Jesus Christ:—Christ is therefore sent
" by God, and the Apostles by Christ, and
" both are done in their order according to
" the will of God;" you observe, that " be-
" fore I can make this or any other quota-
" tion of *any avail*, I must first establish the
" *Humanitarian doctrine of scripture*; for the
" faith of every apostolical writer is ulti-
" mately to be ascertained by a reference to
" the sacred writings."^m

If you use this method of determining the belief of every apostolic writer, how do you know that you have yourself rightly interpreted the sacred writings; or, let *your infallibility* be granted, does it follow that the apostolic writer may not have been mistaken?

" If

¹ See also Mr. Randolph, p. 139.

^m Randolph, p. 62.

“ If the faith of every apostolical writer is to
 “ be ascertained by first establishing the sense
 “ of scripture,” you, sir, have employed your-
 self most absurdly in so diligently searching
 their works. As far as you are persuaded
 that your doctrine is *scriptural*, so far you
 know *their* sentiments, and there is no occasion
 of consulting their works. Why therefore,
 “ after having interpreted Justin by Paul,”
 did you undertake to make it appear that
 “ the opinions of this holy martyr assimilated
 “ with the doctrines of the Apostle?”^a It was
 a work of supererogation.

How much, sir, do we differ in opinion!
 To *me* it appears, that if it be doubtful in
 what sense an apostolical writer employs a
 text of scripture, it will be vain to seek his
 meaning by a reference to the scripture itself,
 for we can never determine, that his con-
 struction was the same as ours.

“ To your observation on a second epistle
 “ of Clemens, and which (on the admission
 “ of

^a Compare Randolph, p. 4 with p. 13.

“ of its being a forgery) was certainly ushered
 “ into the world under *his signature*, and there-
 “ fore justly imagined to agree in opinion at
 “ least, if not in language, I hardly know
 “ how to answer.”^o

That “ you hardly know how to answer,”
 is indeed very true.

“ With regard to your strictures on Παθη-
 “ ματα and Μαθηματα, I would observe, that
 “ whether you allow or not the wilfulness of
 “ the alteration, it is an alteration unsup-
 “ ported by any manuscript; and when,
 “ without knowing *the reasons which Junius*
 “ *advances in behalf of Μαθηματα*, (for I quote
 “ your own words) you bring proofs in fa-
 “ vour of his alteration, or rather a peremp-
 “ tory decision, that Παθηματα cannot be the
 “ genuine reading,”^p &c.

Not having had an opportunity of exami-
 ning the edition of Junius, it was impossible
 F for

^o See Randolph, p. 64, and compare the whole paragraph
 with the remarks in my former Letters, p. 194, 195.

^p Randolph, p. 65.

for me to say what *critical* reasons he might have for preferring Μαθηματα; but I was convinced, by arguments drawn from other passages of Clemens, that Παθηματα could not be the genuine reading. Such arguments are not the less valid, because I am unacquainted with the reasons advanced by Junius, in behalf of Μαθηματα. Why, therefore, have you not offered the least reply to them?

I fancy if the reader will take the pains to consult my former work, p. 198, 199, he will perceive how little foundation there is for your charge, that "I set up *assertions of my own*," unsupported by reasoning.

"And when the form of inquisition, as
 "you properly state it, consisted in this general demand, *Are you a Christian? our separate*
 "notions of what constituted a Christian,
 "would *determine the faith* that could thus
 "boldly triumph over the pains of death,
 "and the malice of persecution."⁹

In

⁹ Randolph, p. 67.

In explaining the form of inquisition, it was not my object to *determine the faith* for which the primitive Christians died, but to shew that it was not *easily determinable*, and consequently that you had no ground for so confidently affirming “that the martyrs of the early centuries endured the cruelties of persecution, for obstinately refusing to renounce *the adoration they thought due to Christ.*”

It was a matter of wonder to me, how you could know the particular sentiments of the accused Christians, when the question was thus general, and the answer but a simple affirmation or negation.

In your last work you have, however, thought proper to advance some instances, in support of your assertion respecting the faith of the martyrs. From what I have written, you may without difficulty collect that your examples of Ignatius and Polycarp have no weight with me; “but the stoning of St. Stephen, as recorded in the acts of the
F 2 “ Apostles,

^r Randolph's Letter to Dr. Priestley, p. 49.

“ Apostles, the murder of St. James, as related from the various accounts of that transaction collected by Eusebius, and the martyrdom of St. Symphorosa, which has a place in the compilation of Ruinart, are *important facts* which must silence me for ever.”

I will be bold enough, sir, to examine each of these instances.

Stephen's belief in the divinity of Christ, you infer, I suppose, from Acts vii. 59: “ And they stoned Stephen, calling upon, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” The word *God, calling upon* GOD, I have omitted, because it does not occur in the original Greek; not that I think any difference, which can affect the question, would be made by retaining it. The sense would then be—Stephen, seeing the glory of God, and Jesus at his right hand; invoked God, and recommended his spirit to the protection of Christ. I have been much pleased with some observations on this subject by the Rev. Paul Cardale,

* See Randolph, p. 67, 68, and also p. 35.

Cardale, nor can I refrain from inserting them, though they have been before cited by Mr. Lindsey, in opposition to the late Mr. Robinson.[†]

“ Stephen, we reasonably conclude, would
 “ have called upon God, when thus dying by
 “ the hands of violence, as he had at all times
 “ past been wont to direct his prayer, had he
 “ not been surpris'd with a sight of the man
 “ Christ Jesus, God's first minister, standing
 “ at the right hand of glory; ready to receive
 “ him. He saw him in the form and likeness
 “ of the *son of man*, or of *the lamb that had been*
 “ *slain*, as represented in the vision, *Revelation*
 “ v. 6. This would naturally, and with the
 “ utmost propriety, lead him to call Jesus to
 “ help him, or eagerly to place his confidence
 “ in that succour he shewed himself officially
 “ ready to give him. He well knew what he
 “ had taught his disciples to expect from him,
 “ as *the resurrection and the life*, or as the vital
 “ head of all his followers. This was as na-

F 3

“ tural

[†] See Lindsey's Examination of Robinson's Plea, 88, 89; also Christie on the Divine Unity, 237.

“ tural as it had been for his disciples, who
 “ had seen his miraculous power, to call on
 “ him thus in a great storm at sea; *Lord, save*
 “ *us; we perish.* Matthew viii. 24, 25. All
 “ the while, and in both cases, *Stephen* and the
 “ disciples must have well known, that it was
 “ their duty to call upon God, as their su-
 “ preme refuge in all perils and extremities.
 “ And inasmuch as, like *Martha*, they were
 “ all of them fully persuaded, that whatever
 “ Jesus would ask of God, God would grant
 “ it; nevertheless, it is not to be wondered at,
 “ that upon their being with Christ, or seeing
 “ him, they should readily apply to him, well
 “ knowing that he had great power with God,
 “ and stood in the highest favour with him.

The murder of James is next in order;
 and as you have chosen Eusebius for your
 authority, I will lay his account before the
 reader, that he may judge of the evidence by
 which you are led to conclude, that this
 Apostle died in a belief of the divinity of
 Christ. James says to the Jews, Scribes and
 Pharisees, who came to demand his opinion of
 Jesus, “ Why do you ask me concerning Jesus
 “ the

“ the Son of man? *He sits in heaven on the*
 “ *right hand of the Great Power, and will come*
 “ *in the clouds of heaven.* Whereby many were
 “ fully persuaded, and glorified God for that
 “ testimony of James, saying, *Hosanna to the*
 “ *Son of David.* When his enemies had
 “ thrown him from the battlement, and be-
 “ gan to cast stones upon him; he, not being
 “ quite dead, kneeled down and said, *I beseech*
 “ *thee, O Lord God, the Father, forgive them:*
 “ *for they know not what they do.*

I have long ceased to be surpris'd, at find-
 ing you advance in your support what is most
 decisively against you. Do you mean to
 prove that James held the doctrine of Christ's
 divinity, because his prayer is solely address'd
 to the Father? or do you think yourself war-
 ranted in your conclusion, because Christ is
 described as *sitting in heaven on the right hand*
of the Great Power? To sit on the right hand
 of a *spiritual* being, cannot be a *literal* phrase,
 but implies a high state of exaltation in hea-
 ven. Besides, Christ is clearly distinguished
 from *the Great Power at whose right hand he sits.*

It

It remains to bestow a few words upon the *remarkable* narrative of St. Symphorosa, which you justly say is deserving of attention, “ if it “ be true.”^u With what propriety have you introduced these last words! for surely the fact may well be questioned. In the preface to the Amsterdam edition, Ruinart mentions, that the account is attributed in the manuscripts to Julius Africanus, but that it cannot be ascertained whether he were the author, since all the works of that historian have been long lost. Let it however be supposed, that this narrative was actually written by Julius Africanus, the truth of it is far from being established. Julius Africanus lived about 100 years after the date of the “ blessed Symphorosa’s” martyrdom. How is it to be determined that his information was accurate?

Thus have I followed you through your Vindication, as far as the early Christian writers are concerned. To refute your arguments has been my *sole* object: if I have been successful in this part of our controversy,

^u Randolph, p. 68.

verfy, *you* have not in the leaft degree fhaken Dr. Priestley's pofition, that the firft Chrif- tians were until the time of Juftin, believers in the fimple humanity of Chrift, and *I* have obtained all which I propofed. *Adbuc sub judice lis eft.*

I remain, Dear Sir,

Your's, &c.

LETTER IV.

REMARKS UPON YOUR APPEAL TO
THE SCRIPTURES.

DEAR SIR,

YOU begin with an attempt to fupport your *perfonification of the Logos*. I have ufed, it feems, “ an *unbecoming* expreffion,” in faying, that until you have eftablifhed the propriety of fuppoſing the Logos to fignify Chrift, it is to no purpoſe to bring forward the opening of John's goſpel. “ My opinion “ being fingular, it is incumbent on me to “ maintain

“ maintain it by proof before I condemn
 “ what has received the sanction of ages.”^x

One would really imagine that I had started some novel doctrine, not a doctrine which has been defended by men of the greatest talents for so many centuries. But what if, unaffected by the reproof, I repeat that, since this question had been so ably combated on both sides, you ought to have stated on what grounds you thought the strongest arguments were on the side of your church, not presumed that its interpretation must necessarily be right?”

“ To shake the reasonableness of our faith
 “ from the testimony of St. John, you inform
 “ us that the pronoun *ουτος* will *equally* apply
 “ to an *attribute* as well as a *person*.”^z

Observe, sir, that when I advance a position, I endeavor to establish it by argument, not *take it for granted that I must be right*.
 Such

^x Randolph, p. 72. ^y Randolph's Letter to Dr. Priestley, p. 15. ^z Randolph, p. 74.

Such an application of *ουτος* you do not dispute, and therefore you say that in this instance we can only be determined by "a comparison of the passage with the context, and with the uniform tenor of scripture language." Mr. Lindsey's translation you have rightly presumed to be that which I approve; and I wonder that in the numerous strong remarks he has advanced in defence of it, you did not find a sufficient answer to all your objections.

"For an Evangelist gravely to begin his history, with telling us that the supreme omnipotent God was *endowed with wisdom*, that through wisdom he made the world, and that wisdom was an everlasting attribute of the Godhead, does not appear to me very consistent with the importance of an apostolic narrative."^a

To this I answer, in the words of Mr. Lindsey's excellent address to the youth of the Universities, vol. ii. p. 35. "There was a peculiar propriety

^a Randolph, p. 75.

“ propriety and beauty, in the Apostle intro-
 “ ducing wisdom, (the wisdom of God) as a
 “ divine person, creating and governing all
 “ things; that he might, in a more forcible
 “ way, inform his readers of what they could
 “ not of themselves know, and of what he
 “ could bear testimony, that this wisdom
 “ was in the highest degree conspicuous in
 “ Jesus Christ.”

The opening of this gospel is thought to
 allude to a passage in Solomon—*The Lord*
possessed me (wisdom) in the beginning of his way,
&c. But perhaps you will say with Justin,
 that by these words God the Son was in-
 tended. If so, then you admit that a God
 may be described under his principal charac-
 ter, and of course that there is nothing *forced*
 or *unnatural* in our supposing the Apostle
 John, to represent the Supreme Being under
 his attribute of wisdom. An attention to the
 context will, however, sufficiently convince us
 that Solomon is not speaking of a *person*, but
 is representing wisdom as the spring of action
 in the Deity. In the opening of this chapter,
 wisdom is characterised as a female being, and
 joined

joined with understanding. *Doth not wisdom cry; and understanding put forth her voice—she standeth in the top &c.*

“ But when I come to the 10th verse, and
 “ read it was in the world, and the world was
 “ made by it, and the world knew it not, I then
 “ discover a confusion of ideas which im-
 “ peaches its rationality. If wisdom was in
 “ the world, or as it must be understood, was
 “ exemplified in the works of creation as the
 “ production of almighty agency, the world
 “ did know it.”^b

If mankind would abandon every idea in which “ they discover a confusion impeaching “ its rationality,” the fate of a Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, would soon be sealed for ever. Listen now to the explanation of the verse above cited, and let us see whether your charge be just. The divine wisdom, by which the world was made, was with Jesus of Nazareth, and the world would pay no attention to the instructions it conveyed through

^b Randolph, p. 69.

through *him*. Thus the divine wisdom is said to have been in the world, because it was particularly conspicuous in *his* person, not because “it is exemplified in the works of “creation.” When you tell us, that we *must* understand it as you represent, might I not say in your own words, that “you choose to suppose us to mean”^c what is most favourable to your own conclusion?

“And wisdom became a man—the acknowledged *attribute of the Deity* is converted into “*substance*. - - - I will then ask, how the “supposition of a *divine person*, assuming human nature, be more mysterious than that “wisdom or power, an attribute of divinity “should be invested with a fleshly clothing; “and whether the conversion of an *accident* “into a *substance*, be clearer to your comprehension than a division of person in the “unity of essence. But since, in order to “make some tolerable sense of the words, a “*personification* has at last taken place, since “an *infinite* is joined to a *finite*, and *quality* “has assumed *quantity*,” &c. &c.

^c Randolph, p. 5.

^d Randolph, p. 77.

“ And wisdom became a man,” &c. Not to enquire whether *ΕΥΕΛΕΤΟ* should be translated *was* rather than *became*, the following paraphrase may perhaps be thought “ tolerable sense.” The Divine Being, who is described by his character or attribute of wisdom, *dwelled* in man, in the man Christ Jesus, by whom he made a display of his glory, &c. This paraphrase involves, in my judgment, no absurdity at all, much less one which merits to be placed by the side of the Trinity.

“ I would cursorily observe, that the Logos “ of St. John, and which by the by he only uses “ in two or three passages of his writings, &c.”

If the Logos had been the name of Christ, is it reasonable to suppose that it would have been mentioned by John only in two or three passages?

To support your idea, that the Logos means Christ, you observe, that “ in the descriptions

* Randolph, p. 77.

“scriptions of Moses, the Christian reader
 “finds the word of God assuming characters
 “and properties of personality that cannot
 “all agree with mere speech, or what is ordi-
 “narily understood by *word*,”^f &c.

By the Jews, who may be supposed to have
 best understood their own scriptures, neither
 the passages you have cited, nor indeed any
 others, were imagined to assert that God the
 Father was represented by Christ, another God
 equal to himself. “Therefore, says Justin,”
 in one of the passages you have quoted, “the
 “Jews thinking it was always the Father of
 “all things who conversed with Moses, when
 “it was the Son, who is named both Angel
 “and Messenger,” &c.—And in another part
 of Justin, Trypho the Jew is made to observe:
 “for to maintain that this same Christ was a
 “God before the world was made, and after-
 “wards submitted to be born, and to be made
 “man, and that he was not man of men as
 “others are, is a thing not only beyond all
 “belief, but foolish.”

The

^f Randolph, p. 80, 81, 82.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews forbids us likewise to adopt your opinion, by declaring that *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."*

This subject is well explained by Mr. Lowman, in his Tracts.

"The Shechinah, or material symbol of glory, and the oracle from thence, may be called the Angel of the Lord, and it is actually so called in scripture. Thus the Shechinah which Moses saw in the fire in the bush, and the voice of the Oracle which he heard from thence, are called the Angel of the Lord. And the Shechinah, which conducted the Israelites in a pillar of cloud and fire, is also called the Angel of Jehovah. + 1st 10.4
So that the appearance and voice of Jehovah in the midst of the fire, and the angel which spake to Moses on Mount Sinai, are equivalent expressions. And thus also, in the language of the Chaldee paraphrase, the Shechinah of Jehovah, the MIMRA DE
G "ADONAI,

“ ADONAI, (that is, the word of the Lord)
 “ are both of them equivalent to the voice of
 “ Jehovah, or the voice of the Angel of the
 “ presence, or the divine majesty and glory.
 “ This observation, which is not a bare con-
 “ jecture of criticism, but which is founded
 “ on many concurrent and direct evidences,
 “ will, I conceive, take away the force of what
 “ is objected; viz. that we must understand
 “ the appearance in the Shechinah, of some
 “ spiritual being representing God; because
 “ it is ascribed to Angels, and the appearance
 “ itself is often called in scripture the Angel
 “ of Jehovah,” &c.

Although these remarks, together with the
 consideration that no intellectual being re-
 presenting God can be equal to him, offer
 a sufficient reply to all you have said re-
 specting the divine appearances; yet I cannot
 help adding a comment upon your expla-
 nation of Genesis xix. 24. *Then the Lord*
rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and
fire from the Lord in heaven. According to
 your interpretation,^g “ *the visible Jehovah*

^g Randolph, p. 81.

“ upon earth rained fire from *the invisible*
 “ *Jehovah* in heaven.”

1 Kings viii. 1. *Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto King Solomon, &c.* 1 Kings xii. 21. *And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah—to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam, &c.* This is a like form of expression (and many instances of the same kind might be adduced from the Jewish scriptures) to that which you have cited from Genesis; and you might as well contend, that two *Solomons*, or two *Rehoboams*, are meant, as that two *Jehovahs*.^h

“ Why our Saviour submitted to be re-
 “ duced to so low a state as that of a common
 “ infant on his entrance into the world, and
 “ why a being of infinite glory and perfection
 “ should condescend to degrade himself from
 “ all this power and dignity, and appear not
 “ only

G 2

^h I would recommend the reader to consult Mr. Christie's work on the Divine Unity, from p. 124 to 129.

“ only in the form, but under all the wants,
 “ and weakneses, and pains of man; are
 “ questions that may lead *reason* astray, and
 “ make it a stumbling-block of *faith*; but
 “ which, presuming to enquire into the *cause*
 “ of a transaction, the *existence* of which is
 “ the only part of it we can possibly know,
 “ forbids any farther answer, than, satisfied
 “ that it is the dispensation of God *made ma-*
 “ *nifest* to us, we deem ourselves bound to
 “ believe it; and that, by *doubting or disputing*
 “ *the evidence*, we should contradict the most
 “ noble and essential part of his almighty
 “ design.”ⁱ

I have so fully explained myself in the
 third letter of my former work, respecting
faith and *reason*, that I shall spare myself
 the trouble of commenting further on the
 subject: I shall only call the attention of the
 reader to the *perspicuity* of this passage,—“ but
 “ which, presuming to enquire,” &c. *Which*
 he will naturally refer to *faith*, and then the
 sentence runs, which *faith*, presuming to en-
 quire,

ⁱ Randolph, p. 86.

quire, &c. Your stile is often very obscure, but it signifies nothing to invite an explanation, for you have already proved yourself unwilling to satisfy a request of that kind.*

“ But before we dwell on the stupendous
 “ dignity of the Messiah’s office, when he
 “ appeared upon earth, permit me to take a
 “ rapid glance at the *predictions* of his extra-
 “ ordinary appearance. In Isaiah, he is pro-
 “ claimed a child to be born, who shall be
 “ called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God,*
 “ *the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*”¹

May I add the remainder of this passage?
*Of the increase of his government and peace, there
 shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon
 his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with
 judgment, and with justice, from henceforth even
 for ever: the zeal of the LORD of HOSTS will
 perform this.*

The translation of Bishop Lowth runs
 thus:—“ For unto us a child is born, unto

G 3

“ us

* See my former Letters, p. 202, 203. ¹ Randolph, p. 87.

“ us a Son is given; and the government shall
 “ be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be
 “ called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God,*
 ✕ “ *the Father of the everlasting age, the Prince*
 “ *of Peace*—Of the increase of his govern-
 “ ment, &c. - - - The zeal of Jehovah
 “ God of Hosts will do this.” It is contended
 that EL Gibbor would be more properly
 rendered *a* Mighty God; but whether it
 should be *a* Mighty God, or *the* Mighty God,
 the term *God* is evidently used in an inferior
 sense, since *the zeal of JEHOVAH the LORD*
OF HOSTS makes the child *Wonderful, Coun-*
sellor, &c. According to other commenta-
 tors, the expressions of *Wonderful, Counsellor,*
 and *Mighty God*, ought to be omitted, and
 ✕ the remainder rendered, *the Messenger of the*
Great Design, the Father of the Age, the Prince
of Peace.^m

“ In

^m See this translation justified in Commentaries and Essays
 written by a Layman, and published by the Society for pro-
 moting the knowledge of the Scriptures, vol. i. p. 171 and
 243. You intimate by a note, “ that supposing the Vatican
 “ copy to be right in omitting the expressions, *Wonderful,*
 “ *Counsellor,* and *Mighty God*; it would not be difficult to
 “ shew that Μεγαλης Βουλης Αγγελος included the full descrip-
 “ tion

“ In Jeremiah he is called **THE LORD**
“ **OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”ⁿ

“ This passage” (says Dr. Blayney, whose candor I cannot but admire) “ should, according
“ to the Hebrew idiom, be literally rendered,
“ *And this is his name, by which the Lord shall call*
“ *Our Righteousness*; a phrase exactly the same
“ as, *And the Lord shall call him so*; which, as I
“ have observed in note on chap. xx. 3, implies
“ that God would make him so as he called
“ him; that is, Our Righteousness, or the au-
“ thor and means of our salvation and accep-
“ tance. So, by the same figure of speech,
“ Christ is said to have been *made of God unto*
“ *us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification,*
“ *and redemption.* 1 Corinthians x. 30.”

“ I doubt not but some persons will be
“ offended with me, for depriving them, by
“ this

“ tion of the prophet,” or, in other words, included the
divinity of our Saviour. Could you succeed, this would be
decisive; and as it would at the same time “ have been so
“ easy,” is it not rather strange that you should have omitted
to assign reasons so completely satisfactory?

ⁿ Randolph, p. 88.

“ this translation, of a favourite argument
 “ for proving the divinity of our Saviour
 “ from the Old Testament. But I cannot
 “ help it: I have done it with no ill design,
 “ but purely because I think, and am morally
 “ sure, that the text as it stands will not
 “ properly admit of any other construction.
 “ The LXX (viz. those who turned the Old
 “ Testament out of Hebrew into Greek, 200
 “ years before Christ) have so translated be-
 “ fore me, in an age when there could not
 “ possibly be any bias of prejudice, either for
 “ or against the before-mentioned doctrine;
 “ a doctrine which draws its decisive proofs
 “ from the New Testament only.”

In his prophetic vision, Daniel beheld one
*like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of
 heaven.*^p

If the Jews understood this prophecy to
 relate to the advent of a Divine being, they,
 as well as you, must have strangely inter-
 preted the very next verse: “ And there was
 “ given

• Notes on Jeremiah, p. 146.

p Randolph, p. 88.

“ *given him dominion and glory,*” &c. No; fir, the Jews put no fuch construction upon this paffage; they fupposed it to predict the greatness of the Messiah, and the glory of his kingdom. But you object, “ that when our “ Saviour fays, *hereafter fhall ye fee the Son of* “ *Man, fitting on the right hand of power, and* “ *coming in the clouds;* the Jews accused him “ of *blasphemy*, and insultingly called him *the* “ *Chrift.*” To insultingly call him *the Chrift*, was no more than to mock him with the name of the Messiah, or the man *mighty in deed or word*, who was to be raifed amongst themselves, for the purpose of freeing the nation from the Roman yoke;^a and to claim to be that eminent prophet, their appointed deliverer, was regarded by them as blasphemy, as an act of irreverence to the Most High, by falsely pretending to a heavenly commission,

If this idea be juft, the comparison of the paffage from Daniel with that from Matthew, does not shew that the Jews understood this
prophecy

^a See Locke’s “ Reasonableness of Christianity, in which
“ this point is fully proved.

prophecy of Daniel to signify that their Messiah was to be of a higher order of beings than man.

Indeed, sir, in another part of your work, strange contradiction! you allow that the Jews
 “ beheld nothing in the character of him,
 “ who was to rule over Israel, but that of a
 “ triumphant hero, and that his disciples were
 “ so strongly tinctured with these opinions,
 “ as to be perpetually mistaking the spiritual
 “ application of our Saviour’s language.”
 How do you reconcile these assertions with what you have said, respecting the Jewish interpretation of that part of the vision of Daniel, in which *he beheld the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven?* or how will you render it consistent with your account of the Jewish belief, concerning the word of the Lord, or the divine appearances in general?^r

Whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting:^s

According

^r Randolph, p. 121, 122. ^s Mr. Randolph’s note, p. 82.

^t Randolph, p. 88.

According to the original, the words are, *whose goings forth have been from the days of the age*, and import only a long indefinite period. But in the opinion of Grotius, *the goings forth* may respect only the descent of the Messiah from a house of illustrious antiquity; and this interpretation, says Mr. Christie with great propriety, is the more natural, because the prophet speaks of one who was to appear at some future period. Calvin interprets this passage, "*whose goings forth have been decreed from the days of eternity.*"^u

All these interpretations are perfectly consistent with the simple humanity of Christ.

In Zechariah ii. 10. "*Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Sion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined TO THE LORD in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of HOSTS hath SENT me unto thee.*"

The

^u See what Mr. Christie has further said on this subject, p. 164, 165.

The same short answer will apply both to this, and the passage you have adduced from Malachi. “ *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD whom ye seek shall suddenly come to HIS temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of HOSTS.*”

The Lord Christ, or the governor of many nations, or the governor that was to come to his temple, is distinguished most clearly from the LORD of HOSTS, by whom he was sent.

Your next enquiry is, “ whether, in the accomplishment of every extraordinary circumstance, thus foretold to attend our Saviour’s advent, there exists not such unequivocal proof of a nature far superior to human, &c. as to impress us under the guidance of the most sober reason, with a conviction of his divinity, and to force from us the undeniable confession of St. Peter: “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?”

I must

* Randolph, p. 89.

† Randolph, p. 90.

I must still insist, notwithstanding your note, p. 90, that the Apostle used not those words in the sense which you annex to them.

The following considerations may serve to expose the futility of your remarks.

1. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

Flesh and blood is a phrase which, both in scripture and in the Jewish writers, constantly signifies man as being compounded of flesh and blood. Matthew xvi. 17. 1 Corinthians xv. 20. Ephesians vi. 12, &c. Thus the import of the words is this: What others said of Christ, Peter had learned from men; but the faith he now professed, being derived from an attention to the miracles wrought by the Father, was therefore said to have been revealed by him. "Those who think," says Mr. Whitby, to whom I am indebted for this explanation, "that Peter had a peculiar *revelation* of this matter, not vouchsafed to others, and that without this he could not have owned *Christ as the Son of God*, must suppose

“suppose the like special revelation given to
 “Nathaniel, contrary to our Lord’s own
 “words, John i. 51. *Because I said I saw thee*
 “*under the fig-tree, believest thou?* and to all
 “others who had the same faith.”²

2. It had been sufficiently exemplified to the disciples, as you rightly observe, by the miracles which Jesus performed, that he was a prophet sent from God; this they had believed, but again they became incredulous; for they “*remembered not* the five loaves of
 “the five thousand, neither the seven loaves
 “of the four thousand.” During this general unbelief amongst them, Peter exclaims, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*; a phrase equivalent, as I before observed, to a declaration of a belief in Jesus, as their appointed deliverer from the Roman yoke. With this explanation, Peter’s future conduct is perfectly consistent. *When Jesus began to shew to his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer, and be put to death, and be raised again*, Peter, dissatisfied with this language in the mouth of one whom he expected

² Whicby; on the New Testament, vol. I. p. 145.

soon to appear as a victorious prince, rebuked him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be*: but strange, indeed, was the Apostle's conduct upon your supposition, and not to be accounted for upon any principle. He had been inspired with a belief in the doctrine of Christ's divinity; he had been told by Christ himself, that this belief was revealed to him by his heavenly Father; these impressions must have been uniformly kept alive by the presence of the being whose divine nature he had confessed; and yet he relapsed into his former carnal notions of Christ's kingdom, and indecently rebuked the *God* with whom he constantly lived and conversed.

3. " The faith which Peter professed, when
 " he declared *thou art the Christ, &c.* was before
 " *that time* the faith and the acknowledgement
 " of all Christ's disciples; for coming out of
 " the ship, they said, *Truly thou art the Son of*
 " *God.* Matth. xiv. 33. And therefore, Peter
 " himself saith of them, as well as of himself,
 " *we know, and have believed, that thou art*
 " *the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"^a

^a Ibidem.

Hence it appears, that Peter's avowal of Christ as the Son of the living God, was not the effect of "immediate illumination shed over his mind;" that it imported not a belief in the divinity of his master; and that had he been inspired with a faith in that doctrine, it was not for the purpose "of leading the other disciples to embrace the same *important truth*." Thus your position is in every part weak and untenable.

The implication of Christ's divinity is, you think, equally strong in Matthew xi. 11, as in the above-cited confession of Peter. I believe, sir, it would be nearer the truth to say, that the one answers your purpose as little as the other. "*Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not one risen greater than John the Baptist; and yet our Saviour is,*" you observe, "*declared to be one whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose.*" Let us not divide the former passage from the context, and its meaning is easily discovered; *but he that is least in the kingdom*

^b Randolph, p. 91.

dom of heaven, is greater than he. If the meanest subject in the kingdom of heaven be greater than John, the forerunner of Christ, how much more so must he be, who is the head of that spiritual kingdom!

How poor now must that reasoning appear, which syllogizes thus! John is the greatest among those born of a woman;—our Saviour is greater than John;—therefore, our Saviour descended from a pre-existent state of dignity.

In opposition to this syllogism, I will put another, which may probably serve to expose it. *John is the greatest among those who are born of women;—the least in the kingdom of heaven (i. e. the least among true Christians)* is greater than John; therefore, the least amongst true Christians descended from a pre-existent state of dignity. *Risum teneatis amici?*

“ Christ uses not the language of *subordinate agency*, like the prophets or apostles;
 “ but with an almighty fiat he says to the
 “ tempest, *Peace, be thou still*; to the unclean
 “ spirit, *Come forth*; to the leper, *I will, be thou*
 H clean;

“*clean*; and to the impotent man, *Rise up*
“*and walk, thy sins are forgiven thee.*”

Instances may be produced in which a prophet or apostle, who is about to perform a miracle, speaks in as *commanding* a manner as Christ. Nathan says unto David, “Thou shalt not die:” 2 Samuel xii. 13. To the man “impotent in his feet,” Paul “said with
“a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet:” Acts xiv. 8.

The Apostles, likewise, had the power of remitting sins as well as Christ; they received their commission from *him, he from God*. John xx. 21—23. “*As the Father hath sent me, I also*
“*send you:—and breathing upon them, he said,*
“*Receive ye a holy spirit, (that is, the gift, or*
“*authority to forgive sins) as I received from*
“*the Father, when he sent me: whosoever sins*
“*ye also forgive, they are forgiven to them; and*
“*whosoever sins ye do retain, that is, not for-*
“*give, they are retained; that is, not forgiven.*”^d

But

^c Randolph, p. 92.

^d Haynes, on the Attributes of God, p. 126.

But the best way of deciding upon the power of Christ, is to take his own express declaration relating to it. *I can of myself do nothing—The Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*

“ When St. Thomas, convinced at last of
 “ his incredulity, falls down at his feet, and
 “ in the impassioned language of belief and
 “ shame, cries out, *My Lord, and my God!*
 “ does our Saviour blame him for those high
 “ and glorious appellations? Does he repro-
 “ bate his conferring on him the title as
 “ inconsiderate and blasphemous?”*

No, sir, he does not. But how will you prove that our Saviour understood Thomas to call him *his Lord, and his God*? It is reasonable to conclude, that the language of the Apostle did not appear to him in that light; for to him who called him *Good master*, he replied, *Why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, and that is God.*

* Randolph, p. 93.

There are several interpretations of this abrupt exclamation; but the remarks of Mr. Whitby (once a Trinitarian) seem to me the most sound and convincing.

“ *My Lord, and my God*; the faith of St. Thomas was only this, that Jesus was really risen from the dead. For when the Apostles had told him they had seen the Lord; he answers, *that except I shall see in his hands the print of the nail, and thrust my hands into his side, I will not believe* (it.) Then Christ coming a second time, faith unto him, *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing, (viz.) that I am risen*. Lastly, our Saviour faith, *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; which shews that he could believe only what he had seen, to wit, that the same body was raised, which had been crucified; neither had he seen, nor could he see with his bodily eyes, that he who was thus raised was his Lord and his God*. These words therefore, *My Lord, and my God*, may have this import; *my Lord and my God hath done this*; and so
“ they

“ they exactly agree with the faith of the
 “ Apostles, saying, *The God of our fathers raised*
 “ *up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree:*
 “ Acts v. 30. See Acts ii. 24. Acts iii. 15;
 “ iv. 10; and xiii. 30. Or thus, *My Lord, and*
 “ *my God!* how great is thy power! for, faith
 “ St. Paul, *God exerted the greatness of his power*
 “ *and the activity of his might, in raising our Lord*
 “ *Jesus from the dead.*”^f Eph. i. 19. 20.

“ Ascribing to himself also the incommu-
 “ nicable attribute of Deity, in the language
 “ of omniscience, he says, *I am he that searcheth*
 “ *the reins and the heart.*”^g

“ Elisha the prophet searched and *knew* the
 “ heart of his servant Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 26.
 “ *Went not mine heart with thee?* Again, 2
 “ Kings vi. 12, it is affirmed of the same per-
 “ son, *Elisha the prophet, that is in Israel, telleth*
 “ *the king of Israel the words that thou speakest*
 “ *in thy bed-chamber;*” and Elisha tells Hazael,
 “ 2 Kings viii. 12, *I know the evil that thou*
 “ *wilt do unto the children of Israel.* And in
 “ Acts, chap. v, we find the Apostle Peter
 H 3 “ possessing

^f Whitby's Last Thoughts, p. 77, 78. ^g Randolph, p. 94.

“ possessing the knowledge of ^{the} heart of Ana-
 “ nias and Sapphira. If then the Prophets
 “ and Apostles, by a power derived from God,
 “ could search the reins and the heart, and
 “ know and tell the most secret thoughts that
 “ passed in people’s minds, even at a distance
 “ from them; why should it be urged as an
 “ argument for the divinity of Christ, that he
 “ possessed a *superior degree* of the same know-
 “ ledge? But our opponents may perhaps
 “ here reply, that the Prophets and Apostles
 “ were acquainted with the heart only by *re-*
 “ *velation*, or a derived power; but that Jesus
 “ Christ knows the heart, by a natural and
 “ inherent power of his own. This assertion,
 “ however, is flatly contradictory to the uni-
 “ form tenor of the word of God; wherein
 “ we are told, that our Lord derives his very
 “ being and all his powers from the Father;
 “ and consequently the capacity of searching
 “ the human heart as well as the rest.”^h

“ With an omnipresence that Deity alone
 “ can fill, he promises *to be present wherever two*
 “ *or three are gathered together in his name.*”ⁱ

^h Christie, on the Divine Unity, 280, 281.

Randolph, p. 94. Vide also Robinson’s Plea.

“ Christ is not speaking of Christians in ge-
 “ neral, at all times, when joining together
 “ in the worship of God as his disciples; but
 “ only of a particular rare case of his Apostles,
 “ in that first age of his religion, when mira-
 “ culous powers were afforded, and their
 “ prayers and requests for particular things
 “ immediately answered. This is evident
 “ from the preceding verse: *I say unto YOU,*
 “ *that if two of YOU shall agree on earth, as*
 “ *touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be*
 “ *done for them of my FATHER which is in hea-*
 “ *ven.* Nor did Christ, by saying that *he should*
 “ *be in the midst of them,* mean that he should
 “ be personally present with them; but that
 “ he should be *with them,* by the extraordinary
 “ divine assistance which would be granted to
 “ them. In the same manner he expresses
 “ himself in other places.”^k

“ And asserting an eternity of duration, *I*
 “ *am,* says he, *the beginning and the end, the first*
 “ *and the last.*”^l

In

^k See Mr. Lindsey's Examination, and his References,
 p. 45, 46.

^l Randolph, p. 94.

In what sense Jesus is *the first and last*, is seen from various passages in the book of Revelation:—*I am*, says our Lord, *the first and the last*.—*I am he that liveth and was dead, &c.* These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive, &c. Such circumstances are only applicable to a creature.

“ *I am the root and the offspring of David,*
“ *and the bright and morning-star.*”^m

Because Christ is called *ρίζα τε Δαβίδ*, you make him the root from which David sprang; but the very reverse is the true signification of the phrase. *Ρίζα τε Ιησους* is applied to Christ in Romans xv. 12, and evidently means, not the stock from which Jesse descended, but a branch which should grow out of his roots. And again saith Esaias, *There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust.* In the same manner

^m Randolph, p. 94.

ⁿ The passage in Isaiah, to which the Apostle Paul alludes, runs in our translation thus: *There shall come forth a rod out*
to

manner $\rho\iota\zeta\alpha$ $\tau\epsilon$ $\Delta\alpha\epsilon\iota\delta$ imports *a branch from the root of David*.

To this last passage you have subjoined, by way of note. “ *I Jesus have sent my angel, &c.* “ To be obliged to believe that he, who dispatched angels on his errands, was but a human being like myself, would make me adopt any persuasion before that of a Socinian.”

Give me leave to employ the same form of argument:—“ This is life eternal, to know *thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” “ To be obliged to believe,” that he who was sent by the only true God, was the great and omnipotent God himself, would make me “ adopt, sir, any persuasion before that of” the Trinitarian; and indeed, if a set of ingenious men had been employed to invent the most absurd system possible, they could not have succeeded

of the stem of Jesse, &c. and in the LXX, *A rod or branch shall come forth from the root of Jesse*. If this rendering be right, we perceive the sense in which $\rho\iota\zeta\alpha$ is employed by the Apostle.

• Randolph, p. 94.

succeeded better than in presenting us with the creed of the established church.

As Jesus Christ was sent by God, so were others sent by him: *God gave unto him the power to shew unto his servants, &c.* as we are told in the very beginning of this book of Revelation.

These illustrations may perhaps be treated by you “with the most determined neglect.”^p Indeed, in not having noticed many of them, you have already proved, either that you were unacquainted with them, or thought them unworthy of your comment; but really, sir, they are entitled to your attention *according to your own principle*. “Did our heavenly guide, “you ask, mean that we should depart from “the established rules of interpretation?”^q No, sir, he did not; and in offering the explanations I have given, I have departed from none of them.

Are we not *justified* in attempting to discover the sense of an author, by investigating the
the

^p Randolph, p. 96.

^q Randolph, p. 99.

the true meaning of his words, by examining the context, and by comparing passages with the language used in other parts of the same writings? If such conduct be *unjustifiable*, then I have offended against *the established laws of interpretation*, whilst this charge will seldom, I believe, be brought against you.

Before I quit this subject, I must pass a remark upon a curious sentence of yours: “ It “ is not to an arbitrary assumption, or to the “ novelty of conjecture, that I shall look for “ additional light and information; nor shall “ I ever admit *this sort of free communication of knowledge* to be any ways serviceable to “ the cause of Christianity.”^r

You think, then, that the cause of Christianity may be hurt by the “ *ingenious illustrations* of very able commentators.” Do you think that it ever received the least detriment by any *ingenious* conjecture offered either by the author of your Family Expository, by Mr. Whitaker, Mr. Hawker, Mr. Jones, &c.? Do you object to any *ingenious* conjectures,

^r Randolph, p. 98.

conjectures, which tend to fix *your own* sense of the scriptures; or is it only to the *ingenious* conjectures of Dr. Priestley, Mr. Lindsey, &c. that you have so great aversion? For my own part, I frankly avow that my feelings are far different. The *ingenious* conjectures of both sides are, I think, “serviceable to Christianity,” and contribute to the discovery of the true meaning of the sacred writings. If Christianity be to be prejudiced by the offer of an *unsound* interpretation, her defenders are either *incapable* or *indolent*; and who will say, that the Christian cause is not benefited by the offer of a *new* construction, which will bear the test of enquiry?

You come now to closer quarters; you undertake to defend your own interpretation of some of the texts you had brought forward in your first work.

I observed, ‘ that, according to the Trinitarian scheme, Christ, the God who came down from heaven and united himself to man, *is to ascend where he was before.* To ascend

‘ cend where he was before, implies to return
 ‘ to a place after an absence from it. But
 ‘ how is an omnipresent God to be absent at
 ‘ any time from any place?’

Now for your remark upon this passage:
 “ Because you are unable to comprehend how
 “ a divine being should assume a human form,
 “ or a human form partake of a divine na-
 “ ture, taking it for granted, it cannot be
 “ literally true,” &c.

I still presume it to be *literally* true, that an
 omnipresent God *cannot be absent at any time*
from any place. I presume it upon as strong
 grounds as that *two and two are four*; both
 the propositions are self-evident.

I observed, ‘ that, according to the Arian
 ‘ scheme, the great pre-existent spirit which
 ‘ came down from heaven, is to ascend
 ‘ where he was before; but it is the *Son of*
 ‘ *Man* who is to ascend where he was before;
 ‘ if then this text be literally taken, it was
 ‘ Christ’s

‘ Randolph, p. 102.

‘ Christ’s human nature which had been in
‘ heaven before,’ &c.

You reply, “ If the *Son of God* be also the *Son*
“ *of Man*, and under *both titles* he is indiscri-
“ minately named, the Arian might accuse
“ you of quibbling.”

The *Son of Man*, *literally* taken, must mean
Christ in *one* of his natures, or *both* of his
natures. If *Son of Man* mean not his *human*
nature in exclusion of his *divine*, neither
will any one be so absurd as to say, that it
signifies his *divine* in exclusion of his *human*.
It includes *both* then, and *Son of God* and *Son*
of Man are indiscriminately applied to the
whole of Christ’s twofold nature. If this be
true, and the text be *literally* taken, Christ,
in his human as well as his angelic nature,
had been in heaven before;—a position which
the Arians will not be disposed to maintain.

With greater propriety may the Arian ac-
cuse you of making but a poor defence for
him, and such as merits not his thanks, than
charge me with “ quibbling.”

† Randolph, p. 103.

“ And supposing the explanation you adopt
 “ to be the true meaning, was it not as easy
 “ for our Saviour to have declared it, as for
 “ Mr. Belsham,”^u &c.

When you would support your doctrine of a Trinity, you tell us that we must not use our reason, and indeed you tell us true, then you would treat scripture with great tenderness, then you would proceed with trembling steps; but when you would attack the sentiments of others, then you march with gigantic strides, then you boldly tell us that such a text cannot be taken literally,^{*} and that if our Saviour had such a meaning, would he not have explained himself in such a manner?

Never more upbraid another for reasoning from *probabilities*, nor for any *freedom of remark*, nor for *bringing their opinions to explain the scriptures*, and *not the scriptures to settle their opinions*.^y

Let

^u Randolph, p. 104.

^{*} Mr. Randolph does not hesitate to reject the literal interpretation: *This is my body which is broken for you, &c.*

^y Randolph, p. 98, 102.

Let me by the side of your questions place another. When our Saviour declared that *he could of himself do nothing, that he knew not the day of judgment, &c.* “would it not have been “easy for him” to have said, I mean, that as *a man, I can do nothing of myself, and I know not the day of judgment*; as a God, I am omnipotent and omniscient? To have guarded against mistake, he certainly would have made this declaration; whilst it was *unnecessary* to give any explanation to the text in which he speaks of *ascending where he was before*. The whole discourse is evidently so figurative, that the most common capacity could not be mistaken; his hearers did not misunderstand him, and fall into an “*idolatrous*” error.”

“To what place then did our Saviour re-
 “turn, in the sight of all his disciples? To
 “allow the fact, and deny the consequences,
 “is what I cannot account for on any prin-
 “ciples of candid reasoning.”^a

How

^a See my former Letters, p. 77, 78; and likewise this work, p. 110, 111.

^a Randolph, p. 106.

How soon you seem to have forgotten, that I declared a preference to Mr. Belsham's interpretation, which denies, not allows, the fact of Christ's return to a place where he had been before! I asserted, that, *literally* taken, the phrase *to ascend where he was before*, implied a return to a place after an absence from it. This remark I offered to those who put a *literal* interpretation upon this text, but I informed you that, in my judgment, the words were *figuratively* used.^b

"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven."^c &c.

All these phrases, *ascending into heaven, coming down from heaven, being sent from God, sent into the world, coming into the world, coming forth from the Father, proceeding forth and coming from God*, express only a state of very intimate communication with God, and were understood in no other light by the Jews.^d

I

"Ye

^b See my former Letters, p. 64 to 69.

^c Randolph, p. 109.

^d See Lindsey's Address, vol. ii. p. 59, 64, 65, &c.

"Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."

Jesus had told his hearers, that whither he was going they could not come, meaning that he should die, rise again, and be taken into heaven. They, misconceiving his words, thought that he intended to kill himself; to whom Jesus says, Ye are taken up entirely with the things of *this world*, or ye would have understood me; I have a heavenly commission, and my kingdom is *not of this world*.

Ye are from beneath, I am from above, taken literally, is a very strange assertion. Jesus says to his hearers, with whom he was conversing upon earth, *Ye are from beneath*, i. e. ye came from hell; *I am from above*, i. e. I came from heaven. I have not yet heard of any pre-existent spirits, who came from the fiery abyss clothed in human flesh, unless you will figuratively suppose it, on account of the malignity of some characters.

"Ought

“ Ought not Christ, says our Saviour after
 “ his resurrection to the two disciples on
 “ their road to Emmaus, to have suffered these
 “ things, and entered into *his* glory? The ex-
 “ pression *his* is inaccurate and ungramma-
 “ tical, unless it was a glory *he never had*,
 “ but was going to possess.”^f

This glory was to be Christ's, after he had endured the appointed sufferings. Well, therefore, when he had gone through the painful scene, might he call the glory, the certain reward “ *which should follow,*” *his* glory. Instead of this phrase being inaccurate according to Humanitarian sentiments, it is so according to yours. To *enter* into his glory, marks that the glory was something hitherto unpossessed and future. If Christ had been the second person of the Trinity, he should have said, *re-enter* into his glory. Besides, he speaks of it, John xvii. 22, as a glory which was *given* to him. I have already commented upon the absurdity of an unchangeable being divesting himself of his dignity, and reassuming it.^g

I 2

“ I have

Randolph, p. 110. ^g See my former Letters, p. 123.

“ I have foreborne to quote, as an additional illustration of our Lord’s pre-existent state, the famous text of St. John, chap. viii. 58, *Before Abraham was, I am*; because I wish to meet every particular objection you make, with a particular answer.”^b

I fancy it must appear to the reader, that you have lost sight of this design in many instances. Some of them I have already pointed out; besides which, let him consult your work, p. 130, where, to my *metaphysical subtlety*, you oppose nothing but your own *want of comprehension*; and likewise p. 136, with many other parts, where you cry out against the use of reason, because its plain dictates are too strong to be resisted.

I objected to your interpretation of the text, “ *before Abraham was, I am*, that Christ, since the pronoun *I* refers only to a part of himself, uses a mental reserve unworthy of his high character.” I think that your reply to this reasoning is solid; for a person may
affirm

^b Randolph, p. 111.

affirm of himself, what belongs *only* to a part. But the charge of making Christ an equivocator, may still be made good against you. Notwithstanding, a man may *affirm* of himself, what is true only respecting a part, as that he is wounded or hurt, though it be only in one limb; yet he cannot justly *deny* of himself what belongs only to one part, because it belongs not to another. Mr. Emlyn, to whom I am obliged for this distinction, has well illustrated it. “For instance, I have
 “two organs of sight, two eyes: now, suppose I converse with a man with one eye
 “shut, and the other open; if, being asked
 “whether I saw him, I should dare to say,
 “I saw him not, (without any limitation)
 “meaning to myself, that I saw him not
 “with the eye which was shut, though still
 “I saw him well enough with the eye which
 “was open; I fear I should bear the reproach of a liar and deceiver, notwithstanding such a mental reservation as some
 “would attribute to the *Holy Jesus*. For
 “knowledge is the *eye* of the person. Jesus
 “Christ is supposed to have two of these
 “knowing capacities; the *one* weak, the *other*
 I 3 strong

" strong and piercing, that discerns all things.
 " Now as *such* an one, the disciples repair to
 " him, and ask him, when the end of the
 " world and time of his coming shall be? He
 " answers them, by giving them some general
 " account of the matter; but says, that the
 " particular *day and hour* he knew not, nor did
 " any know but the Father, *meaning* (say my
 " opposers) that he knew it not with his
 " *human* knowledge, though he knew it well
 " enough with his *divine*, at the same time
 " that he said *the Son knows it not*, absolutely
 " and indefinitely."

" And yet, if Jesus Christ had a *divine*
 " knowledge and nature, no doubt his disci-
 " ples (who, if any body, must be supposed to
 " believe it) directed the question to that,
 " rather than to the imperfect human capa-
 " city; and yet, in answer to it, he says, he
 " *knew not the day*; which would not be
 " counted sincerity or truth in man, much
 " less was Jesus Christ in danger of it; in his
 " mouth *no guile was*; let us not impute it
 " to him."

" The

“ The Jews took up stones to cast at him,
 “ not because they did not understand him,
 “ but because they did not believe his words.”¹

This is true, though not in the sense you mean; they rightly conceived him to pretend to a greater character than that of Abraham, by declaring himself the Messiah, and their indignation was roused against him, because they looked upon him to be an impostor.

In opposition to this interpretation, you tell me, that the criticism of Dr. Lardner, which so much pleased me, is not only unfounded, but *illiterate*. But what if I shew you that Dr. Lardner's interpretation is defended by your attack. I will take *πριν* in your own signification. My argument is this—that it is a Jewish form of speech, to represent as prior in time, what is superior in dignity. The term *πριν*, therefore, agreeably to my rendering as well as yours; denotes time. Thus when you would display a knowledge of Greek to one “ whose expedients to get rid of
 “ your

¹ Randolph, p. 112.

“ your observations have no Greek in them,”^k
 you are actually putting the same construction as myself; and thus am I right, supposing me to have an inclination to submit to you as an arbiter in letters.

That *εγω ειμι* is an elliptical expression, you do not pretend to deny; on the contrary, you confirm it by new instances. But when I observed, that it was equivalent to a declaration of being the Messiah, I did not anticipate the necessity of adding, that it had no relation to the Messiah, when he was not the person spoken of before. The subject on which I was speaking, and the instances which I adduced, were sufficiently explanatory of my meaning.

“ Let us then suppose, St. Matthew and St. Luke to be entirely silent as to the manner of our Saviour’s birth, yet when they talk of him as being the *Son* and the *Lord of David; greater than Solomon; greater than the temple; and even the Lord of the Sabbath, &c.*”^l
 “ *The*

^k Randolph, p. 115,

^l Randolph, p. 120.

"The Son and the Lord of David."

Christ is called the Son of David, because he sprang from that root, because from him he was lineally descended. David, in the spirit of prophecy, calls him *Lord*, "not because he is God, but because he is the anointed of God, the *king* of Israel, far superior to all the prophets, kings, and legislators, who went before him; appointed by God the *judge* of the living and the dead. In the Hebrew original, there is a striking difference in the language. JEHOVAH LADONI signifies the sovereign, self-existent, and independent being; but ADON, the word used where Christ is called the *Lord* of David, signifies any lord or *master* whatever, and is applied to *Potiphar*, *Joseph*, and others in the Old Testament."^m

"Greater than Solomon, greater than the temple, and even the Lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus as a *prophet*, *mighty in deed and word*, and far superior to all other prophets, kings, and

^m See Christie, p. 145.

and legislators, *was greater than Solomon. Jesus was greater than the temple, and Lord of the Sabbath*, “because he possessed such a
 “power as the Jews allowed to their own
 “prophets, in cases of necessity and higher
 “importance; namely, a power to dispense
 “with that rest from labour, which the letter
 “of the law respecting the sabbath required.”ⁿ

In my former work, I contended that John v. 19, *I can do nothing of myself*; and John x. 34, 35, *If ye called them Gods, &c.* clearly explained in what sense our Saviour called God *his Father, making himself equal with God*, or rather *like* unto God, and rendered “all verbal criticism unnecessary.”^o In this opinion I persist; and should I grant that *ιδιον πατερα* marks Christ to claim God for his Father, in a more than common manner, it is in consequence of the important commission he had received from the Father, who was constantly with him, and by him performed signs and wonders, not in consequence of some *mysterious*,
ous,

ⁿ Whitby's Commentary, vol. i. p. 117.

^o See my former Letters, p. 81.

ous, ineffable generation of one God by another God.

Let us now examine your objections to the use I have made of the above-mentioned texts.

“*Verily, verily, I say unto you, I can do nothing of myself.* John v. 19. But you leave out the latter part of the verse, *for what things soever the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth.*”^p

From these concluding words, you infer that the Son can *of himself* or by *his own* power, do all which the Father could perform. This cannot be the sense, because it is immediately subjoined—*for the Father loveth the Son, and SHEWETH him all things that himself doeth.* It appears therefore, to be our Saviour’s meaning, that though *of himself* he could do nothing, yet, assisted by *the power of the Father*, who loved him, he could work the greatest miracles.

“*If*

^p Randolph, p. 128.

“ *If ye called them Gods unto whom,*” &c.
 “ Considering this as an explication of his
 “ meaning, or, as you call it, a defence against
 “ the accusation of blasphemy, it turned out
 “ a most unfortunate one; for he had no
 “ sooner uttered it than he was forced again
 “ to escape from their hands to prevent assass-
 “ ination.”^q

Christ, accused of blasphemy for calling *God his Father*, &c. justifies the appellation, by urging that he is that eminent prophet *whom the Father hath sanctified*, &c. Such a defence must naturally excite the same, nay, greater indignation in the Jews, because he persisted in his claim; and hence they seek to kill him. How then does it appear that my former quotation is unhappily chosen? To invalidate my inference from it you had but two methods, neither of which you have undertaken—the one, to prove that *Son of God* was understood by the Jews to signify more than Messiah, or the long-expected King and Prophet—the other, that falsely to pretend to that character was not deemed blasphemy.

^q Randolph, p. 129,

In opposition to my interpretation of the texts which you adduced in favor of the atonement, you have done little else than tell me, " that you should feel the ground sink
" under you without the upholding support
" of an interceding Saviour; and that you
" can find no refuge from guilt, but in that
" *unfinning* obedience which is placed to our
" account."

One text indeed you have adduced, with a view to refute my position, that sacrifices were not considered by the Jews as an expiation for the breaches of the moral law. " The life
" of the flesh is in the blood, and I have
" given it you upon the altar to make an
" *atonement for your souls*, for it is the blood
" that maketh *an atonement for the soul*." True, sir, the blood made an atonement for the soul which had been guilty of a breach of the *ceremonial* law, *i. e.* purified the offender so far as to procure him permission again to join in the worship of the temple: but the blood of sacrifices could not make the

* Randolph, p. 133.

* Randolph, p. 132.

the offerer *perfect*, as *pertaining to the conscience*. Hebrews ix. 9.

“ The adjective *ισος* is *universally* used to “ denote equality.”

As you have used Homer in your support, you cannot object to the same authority in opposition to you.

— *υπεραει ισος αελλη.*^u

Hector is described as falling upon his enemies like a storm rushing from above. The poet could not mean to say, that the force of the one and the other was *exactly equal*; and accordingly *similis* is used in the Latin version. But Mr. Emlyn has completely refuted your assertion. “ The word “ *ισος* admits of degrees of comparison, *ισοτερος*, *ισοτατος*. Now a strict arithmetical “ equality consists in an exact point; things “ cannot be more or less equal, but they may “ be more or less alike.”^x

Dr.

^t Randolph, p. 142.

^u Clark's Homer, 451.

^x Narrative of the proceedings against Mr. Thomas Emlyn, p. 40.

Dr. Lardner you have called an “*illiterate*” critic;’ Dr. Priestley you will not allow to be a good Greek scholar; and me, the last and least, you have pronounced inferior to the “most ignorant school-boy, scarcely out of his grammar.”² Entertaining such a notion of *them*, it is not to be wondered that you feel so great contempt for *my* learning; but this is not the observation I would now make; I would only beg you to consider, that if I approved language like yours, you have furnished me with a most excellent opportunity of retorting it.

“*The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second is the Lord from heaven.*”²

“Adam was perishable, like the materials out of which he was framed. But *the second man*, to whom belongs the spiritual body the Apostle had mentioned just before, who is Christ *the Lord, is from heaven*, of a heavenly or divine fabric and constitution.” *And as we have borne the*
image

¹ Randolph, p. 114.

² Randolph, p. 34.

³ Randolph, p. 147; also Robinson's Plea.

image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.^b

“ But waving this, the learned know that
 “ the term Lord has crept in by the mistake
 “ of transcribers.”^c

If I understand what you advance, p. 162, 163, it amounts to this. The Humanitarian *literally* interprets the texts which relate to the *sole divinity of the Father*, and the Swedenbourgian *literally* interprets the texts which assert the *sole divinity of our Saviour*: the latter, therefore, has as good ground to stand upon as the former, and may with equal propriety say, that to “ the seemingly discordant “ passages he gives a solution *easy, natural, and “ consistent with scriptural phraseology.*”

Let us view, in an instance or two, the solution which a Swedenbourgian must give to the *seemingly discordant passages.*

When our Saviour rebukes a person for calling him *good*, and affirms that *there is none good*

^b 1 Cor. xv. 49.

^c Lindsey's Examination, p. 32.

good but one, that is God; to the Swedenbour-
gian it does not appear that he disclaims, in
the most unambiguous terms, any divinity in
himself. Like you, sir, he paraphrases it
thus:—I am not good in my human nature,
but in my divine I am, for I am the only
God. In the same manner he construes the
following text, *I can do nothing of myself*:—In
my human nature I can do nothing, but as
sole God, I can do every thing. Thus the
Swedenborgian must support *the sole divinity
of the Son* upon the same *easy and natural* prin-
ciples as you support your triune Deity.
*Like you, he converts his spotless master into a
shameful equivocator.*

Here I close my comments on your book.
If there be any part to which I have not re-
plied, let it not be thought that I have yielded
to the force of your reasoning, but that I
judged it sufficiently refuted in my former
letters, or too trivial to require notice. The
controversy, as it appears to me, is exactly *in
statu quo* as when you took up the pen; and
your time might have been more usefully em-
ployed. I cannot think that, by your *two*
books,

books, you have affected a *single argument* of Dr. Priestley's; and therefore, it must stand or fall according to the strength or weakness of what has been urged by his *former* opponents. To hear from you again, you have informed me that I am not to expect; nor indeed should I wish you to alter your resolution, until you were satisfied that you could advance something *new* and *decisive* on the subject. The same wishes which you entertain for my happiness, do I entertain for your's; and since, through anxiety for my salvation, "you intreat me to reflect on the "importance of the examination," and urgently exhort me to *attentive* enquiry;^d I cannot but thank you for the *motive*, though I have no reason to be delighted with the *insinuation*. Your prayers also, that, "in the "spirit of free enquiry, I may not lose the *sub-* "stance of religion," demand my acknowledgments. Whilst I persevere in a course of virtue, making the happiness of mankind the great object of my conduct, I am sure that I have the *substance* of religion; and *free enquiry* is,

^d Randolph, p. 79.

^e Randolph, p. 166.

is, I should suppose, as favorable to a good life as *implicit faith*.

Permit me to add, that this correspondence has been productive of no "regret" on my part. I entertain too good an opinion both of you and myself, to suppose that difference of sentiment will occasion the smallest interruption to our familiar intercourse. But were this consequence even *certain*, I should not in the least degree repent; the dictates of duty should bear down all *inferior* considerations. Though not "*commissioned*" by the state to inculcate religious doctrines, I owe obedience to a Higher Power, and hold it a sacred obligation "to bear witness to the truth."

With every affectionate wish for your happiness,

I remain,

Dear Sir, your's,

B. HOBHOUSE.

^f Randolph, p. 165.

E R R A T A.

Page 21. third line from bottom, for *discouraging* read *encouraging*.

27. l. 17, dele inverted commas.

50. third line from bottom, dele *be*.

13 MR 63

